

# HARTFORD'S FIRST CHURCH



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*Hartford's First Church*







*The fourth Meeting House of the First Church  
of Christ in Hartford 1932*

# HARTFORD'S FIRST CHURCH

*by*

ROCKWELL HARMON POTTER

*The Sixteenth Minister*

*With an Appreciation of the Author*

*by*

HENRY AUGUSTUS PERKINS



HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

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*Dedicated  
to  
The First Church of Christ in Hartford  
in grateful remembrance  
and  
with confident hope  
on the occasion of its  
Three Hundredth Anniversary*

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## *Preface*

IN OBSERVING the three hundredth anniversary of its beginnings in Newtown in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, it has been the expressed desire of the First Church of Christ in Hartford to issue a volume which may summarize something of the history of the Church and present an interpretation of its life and work.

The history of this Church has been adequately told by the Reverend George Leon Walker D. D., the Minister at the time of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary observance in 1883. His volume "History of the First Church in Hartford 1633-1883", published in 1884, will remain the authoritative account of the life of the Church during those two hundred and fifty years. It is based upon a careful study of the available original records and is told with clarity, directness and adequate historical perspective.

The facts of the history set forth in these pages are taken from Dr. Walker's admirable record, from the Records of the Church and of the First Ecclesiastical Society, from the "Magnalia" of Cotton Mather, from published anniversary and other occasional sermons, from the files of the Connecticut Courant and from such biographies of the ministers of the Church as are available.

The chapters which follow seek to summarize briefly the more significant phases of the life of the Church and its activity through its long and noble history, and to interpret the continuing spirit of its message and its ministry. I have not attempted to tell the story in chronological order, as Dr. Walker has so ably done this. I have sought, rather, to make each chapter a unit in itself, carrying its own story through the three hundred years. This has necessarily resulted in some duplication where different phases have

touched each other. I have not undertaken to appraise and pronounce upon the historical questions concerning which authorities differ or the theological positions which have been taken by the successive ministers. I have not included reference by name to the scores of devoted men and women who have filled responsible positions in the work of the Church, and the hundreds of those who by their Christian experience and character have borne witness to its message in their lives.

A chronology of the more important events of the last fifty years is included in an appendix, and records the service of interim pastors, assistants to the ministers, organists and other members of the Staff.

Generous, diligent and efficient service in the gathering of the material presented and in the preparation of these pages for the press has been given by Miss Helen Everton Brown and Miss Alice Lyon Hildebrand of the Staff of the Church. Mr. Charles B. Woods has made the sketches of the second and third Meeting Houses which appear among the illustrations. The Reverend Warren S. Archibald, Minister in the Second Church of Christ in Hartford, my friend and colleague, has read the proof and made helpful suggestions. The Church will share with me in gratitude for these contributions to the observance of its anniversary.

R. H. P.

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*Hartford's First Church*



## CHAPTER I

### *In the Beginning*

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST in Hartford had its origin in Old England. It was born in the Puritan Movement among the churches of Essex County.

The Reformation had been at work among earnest and eager spirits in these churches for more than a generation. Throughout the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth the spirit and purpose of the new and freer forms of the Christian faith had been moving toward expression in shaping the organization and procedure of the ancient churches in the towns and countryside. The Bible had been published in what we know as the "authorized version" in the time of King James and had been in the hands of the ministers of the churches and the more intelligent folk of their parishes for nearly a full generation. Protest was made in many churches against the formality of the ritualistic services which prevailed as the expression of Christian faith and were offered to the people as their means of guidance in the Christian way.

In the third decade of that great seventeenth century Thomas Hooker, a Fellow of Emmanuel College of Cambridge, was asked to serve as lecturer in the ancient parish Church of St. Mary's at Chelmsford. He had been a diligent

and faithful student in his course at Emmanuel and upon his graduation had been appointed to a fellowship, one of the duties of which was to serve as occasional lecturer in parishes within the reach of Cambridge where his services might be desired.

The occasions of his lectures were probably special meetings on Sunday afternoons in the parish church together with an opportunity now and then to take the place of the preacher in the regular services on Sunday morning or evening. The thoughtful people of the parish of St. Mary's were not slow to recognize that in the voice of this young scholar from Cambridge the old gospel was being presented with new meaning. He spoke directly to their hearts with the vitality of his message and awakened their minds to an ardent quest for the larger meanings of the faith which they cherished and by which they sought to live. Many of the congregation came to feel that their church life needed for its continuance the guidance and inspiration of this new voice.

Accordingly when ecclesiastical authority denied the continuance of this ministry to the church in Chelmsford, these who had been won to it sought some means by which they might have this privilege granted to them for the future. The news had come to them of the new world overseas which was being opened to English settlers, and in which there was the opportunity for a larger economic life, for political freedom and for a religious liberty, which they came to feel they could not enjoy in the church of their birth and early training.

A group of those stirred by this hope proposed to Mr. Hooker that they would make the great adventure to the new world and establish themselves there as a colony on condition that he undertake to go with them as their min-



ister, or at least to follow them and assume leadership as their Pastor and Teacher as soon as the way might be opened to him.

The hand of ecclesiastical authority was by this time being felt by Mr. Hooker. He gave a tentative assent to the proposals made to him and left England to take refuge in Holland from the authorities of State and Church, whither many refugees from civil and religious restrictions had preceded him.

In 1632 the group of those who were moved to undertake this adventure carried out their plans and set sail for the new world. They arrived in Massachusetts Bay and began "to sit down at Mount Wollaston". They found welcome from the settlers that had preceded them and later were assigned to the land bordering the north side of the Charles River where now the city of Cambridge stands. There they established themselves, calling their community the New Town to distinguish it from earlier settlements which were nearer the shores of the Bay.

During the winter that followed we may imagine them facing the severities of the New England climate, the bleak northeast winds and the Atlantic storms, and living upon the provisions they had brought with them or depending upon their neighbors in Boston and the other towns of the Colony to supplement the scanty store which they had been able to secure from the soil or from the forest in the late months of the summer and during the autumn.

In 1633 Mr. Hooker carried out his promise and purpose and came from Holland by way of England to join them. With him came Samuel Stone who had been a Puritan Lecturer at Towcester, Northamptonshire, and who had been invited to assist Mr. Hooker in New England. On the fourth of September they arrived and were welcomed by

those to whom Mr. Hooker had ministered under such different circumstances in Chelmsford. On the eleventh of October they assumed the leadership of the community, at least so far as its religious organization was concerned, and we know that they took at once their place as influential leaders among the ministers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

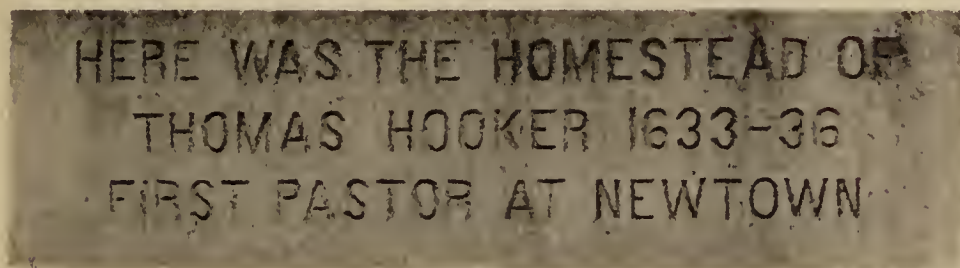
The Newtown community under the leadership of their ministers presumably expected to continue upon the lands which had been assigned to them by the authorities of the Bay Colony, but within a short time the adventurous spirit that was in them began to be restless. As early as 1635 they presented a petition to the General Court asking that they be given permission to re-locate themselves upon the banks of the Connecticut River. One may well imagine the astonishment with which the proposal must have been received by the Court to which it was presented. The hundred miles of rough and almost trackless forest which separated the Colony from the Connecticut must have seemed a formidable barrier to any such migration as was proposed. Indeed it is difficult for us to understand how such a proposal could have matured into form so soon after the community had made its settlement in Newtown.

The text of the petition which was presented to the Court gives us a formal statement of their reasons for removal and suggests something of the experiences that lay back of their desires. They represented that they needed land for their flocks and herds. This of course seems absurd to us now, for the few score families could not have had by that time any very considerable number of cattle or sheep, and it would seem as though the hinterland of the Bay Colony might have provided adequate sustenance for sufficient grazing and farming operations to care for the





*Thomas Hooker's House in Newtown*



*Tablet on Boylston Hall, Harvard College Yard*





community for a score of years. However, when one remembers how rocky that land is and tries to reconstruct in thought the difficulties which faced them in finding hidden away on its wooded surface the comparatively meager areas which would lend themselves to their tillage, and when one remembers further that a few adventurers had visited the Connecticut valley and brought back report of broad reaches of tillable land on both sides of its banks and for scores of miles along its course, one does not wonder that the Newtown colonists felt that having come so far, they might better their condition by going a little farther. They doubtless could look forward to the use of the river as a highway both to the Sound to the southward, and so to the sea, and to the farther reaches of what they must have expected to become a profitable region with which to carry on trade to the northward. The petition to the Court also stressed the point that if some of the English settlers around the Bay did not take possession of the river lands, they would doubtless fall into the hands of the rival Dutch Colonists who had already made their way up the river and established a trading post as the possible nucleus of a settlement where Hartford was later built.

It was, however, the third reason alleged in the petition which doubtless had the greatest influence. They said, "It is the strong bent of our spirits to remove thither." Here doubtless is reflected something of the rivalry in leadership that we know grew up between the ministers who had been a little earlier on the ground in the Bay Colony and Hooker whose vigorous personality at once took prominent place among them. There was a divergence of political ideals between John Cotton, the Minister of the Church in Boston, and the Minister of the Newtown Colony. The former had little faith in democracy and was set upon de-

veloping political institutions so as to bring about a theocracy which would express itself in an aristocracy. Hooker believed in theocracy, but his theocracy was one which sought to express itself through the voice and the vote of the people. Cotton sought to limit the franchise strictly to those who were members of the church as well as property holders. Hooker desired a universal franchise, but it was not so much dissent as to any particular policy that caused the cleavage between Boston and Newtown as a different way of looking at things and different ideals for the development of the community.

After discussion, the General Court gave them permission to remove to Connecticut, and in 1636 the memorable migration took place. The Church itself moved as a Colony along what had been rudely traced out as the Bay Path from the banks of the Charles to the banks of the Connecticut, and crossing the river somewhat north of the present site of Hartford, they located where the city that honors them has grown up.

They came in the early summer and established themselves east of a road that reached roughly along the line of the present Main Street from the little river northward to what is now the corner of Morgan Street. A rude square structure was erected as a community center, meeting house, court house, arsenal and town house, just eastward of the site where the old State House was to be built about one hundred and fifty years later. Through the winter the colonists must have endured many distresses and some severe suffering, but their courage was undaunted and in the following springtime none were minded to return to the Newtown from which they had come out. They began to prepare for themselves permanent dwellings, to assign lands for their use and to enter into community relationships with



the settlers at Windsor on the north and at Wethersfield on the south, who for much the same motives had made the journey from the Bay to the River either directly as the Hartford Colony had come or by the much longer water way around the Cape, through the Sound and up the River.

In 1639 a significant step was taken in the political development of the towns which constituted the Colony upon the Connecticut. A convention of the representatives of these three towns met in Hartford and framed what they called the "Fundamental Orders," a document which we should now call a Constitution, to order and direct the government of their united communities. In the shaping of this document the Minister of the Hartford Church had great influence and it may not be too much to claim for him that it was under his inspiration—perhaps especially under the inspiration of a notable sermon preached by him when these delegates assembled—that this Constitution took form.

Undoubtedly he had strong support from the leaders in the other towns and especially from Roger Ludlow, the civic leader of the Windsor community. It may be that it was Hooker's idealism as to the possibility of a government wherein every man should find his adequate place that stirred the representatives of the three towns to undertake the framing of this instrument, while it was the trained legal hand of Ludlow that fashioned the precise terms in which it was formulated. There is honor enough in the significance of that event to provide distinction for all those who were parties to its formation and adoption, and certainly enough for the leaders of the three communities who gave their hearts and hands to its fulfillment.

The Church and the community were practically though not theoretically identical. It was not necessary that every

voter be a member of the Church, and presumably there were some who were property holders in the community and voters in the town who were not members of the Church, but the people came to self-consciousness chiefly as a Church in the regular meetings for worship on Sundays and for the Thursday lectures in the midst of each week. Vigorous preaching from the pulpit demanded their intelligence. The minister's sermons were not doctrinal in comparison with the sermons of the contemporary Puritan divines. His preaching was the preaching of Christian experience. It grew out of his own experience and it applied Christian truth to the life of his hearers. There was a practical quality in all said from the pulpit which stimulated and stirred Christian life in the congregation and the community and identified the minister with the struggles and aspirations of his people to a marked degree.

Under the guidance of the government thus established, the life of the community in Hartford took its place in relation to the towns to the north and to the south and the ordered growth of the settlement went forward. Numbers were added slowly for there was comparatively little migration from England at this period. None of these towns grew rapidly, but they developed in their community life and in their mastery of the conditions by which they were surrounded.



## CHAPTER II

### *The Meeting House and the Main Street*

THROUGH all the three hundred years of the life of Hartford, from the primitive settlement to the greater Hartford of the present time, the Meeting Houses of the First Church have stood at the heart of the town. The location has been changed scarcely more than a city block, and has always been close to what we know as the Main Street. As passive observers of the life of the city streets, and as centers from which much has gone forth that has influenced the individual lives and corporate actions of successive generations of citizens, what tales these Meeting Houses could have told, could they have spoken, or could even now tell, of stirring events, of tragedies, of sorrow and of joy! What colorful scenes of war have passed before the eyes of these Meeting Houses, the homes of the Church which is dedicated to peace on earth! From the setting forth of the little band of men from the three river towns for the Pequot war, blessed and encouraged by Thomas Hooker, to the wild rejoicings at the news of the signing of the armistice of the World War, many are the events of such a character which have passed in review before the watchful gaze of the old places of worship.

When that story, known to every Hartford school child, of the stealing of the charter from under the hand of Governor Andros, was enacted, the Meeting House was there—may even have been the scene of that thrilling escapade, for many were the public meetings held within its walls. When the schoolhouse on the square was blown up at the celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act, the Meeting House looked on, and when joy was turned to mourning because of the lives lost in that thoughtless celebration, doubtless it was to the Meeting House that the saddened citizens came to pay their last respects to the dead, for even then, one hundred and thirty years from the founding of the town, there was but one other church organization. When General Washington rode through the town to take command of the army at Cambridge, and stopped to rest at the home of Colonel Wadsworth, from its vantage point across the street, the Meeting House watched the procession. When the town resounded with excited talk as General Gates encamped a division of his army on the meadows to the north, it heard the clamor and tumult, and when Yorktown fell and peace was proclaimed, it listened gladly and rejoiced in the end of the conflict.

When Lafayette visited Hartford, a hundred years and more ago, and small girls strewed flowers in his path, this Meeting House in which we now worship watched the scene, as it has since watched the triumphal processions of many of the great and courageous of the land. And often it has put on the symbols of mourning for the leaders of the nation or for a beloved leader of its own flock. The countless scenes upon which the successive Meeting Houses have looked can only be suggested here, but before the eyes of a sympathetic imagination, what pictures will rise of three hundred years, not only of events of importance and public



interest, but of the range and the reach of the common life of the common folk who walked the Main Street of the old town, bearing burdens with heavy steps, or treading lightly through joyful days!

When we consider the mere physical growth of the city through three centuries, we are amazed to find that the first three houses of worship looked upon a town which changed comparatively little as the years went by. It is our own Meeting House which has witnessed the great changes in the growth and life of the town. And this in spite of the fact that Joel Hawes, in his address delivered at the close of the second century says, "How changed is the scene around us from what our fathers beheld two hundred years ago. We now behold—the busy mart—the crowded city—splendid public edifices." Yet there were hardly more changes in the first two centuries than we see within a decade now. As Dr. Hawes records, "The progress of change is still going on with constantly increasing rapidity. What new scenes of interest may arise to spread themselves around the city of our abode, or affect the destinies of our common country, before another day like this shall return, is known only to the all-comprehending vision of God." Surely the changes have been marvelous. In the census of 1790, the first federal census taken after the establishment of the nation, the population of Hartford was given as four thousand and ninety souls. In 1830, one hundred years ago, the population was about nine thousand eight hundred, and the town boundaries were scarcely different from those of the original settlement—the river on the east, Park Street and the South Green on the south, somewhat beyond Morgan Street in a northerly direction, and the line of the present railroad tracks and Washington Street on the west. Outside of these limits were found farms, pasture land and

swamp. The Sigourney homestead, that stately old mansion which the seeking eye may still find facing the railroad south of Asylum Street, hidden and surrounded by warehouses, a pathetic semblance of its former self, was called, one hundred years ago, one of Hartford's suburban residences. The old bridge across the Little River at Main Street, one of our ancient landmarks, was scarcely finished when the town celebrated its bicentennial. What more vivid realization of the size of the city could we gain than by looking at the Directory of 1838—a little volume less than four by six inches, and hardly one quarter of an inch thick!

It was, literally, only a moderate sized village over which our first Meeting Houses watched. Business sections and residence sections were not differentiated when "the new brick Meeting House" was built in 1807. The finest residences and the shops of the town stood side by side. Indeed it is worthy of note that not until 1923 was the parsonage of the First Church more than half a mile from the Meeting House, and until almost the twentieth century the successive parsonages stood but a short way from Thomas Hooker's original homestead site on what is now the corner of Arch and Prospect Streets, where his well is still to be found in the clamoring foundry that covers it. In short, it was a peaceful New England village, with shaded streets, white pillared houses, small one-storied shops and hospitable taverns, before whose doors clattering stage coaches drew up, on which "the new brick Meeting House" looked down at the beginning of the last century. Now, as a treasured historic building, it looks up to the lofty towers and many-storied offices all about it, and remembers the little town in which its life began, and which it has seen grow and change to a great modern city of ceaseless activ-





*First Meeting House in Connecticut.*

The above is believed to be a correct representation of the first house ever erected in Connecticut for Christian worship, built in 1635. Some of the lumber of the first house is still in existence, a portion of it being used in the construction of the Centre Congregational Church.



*Rev. Thomas Hooker's House.*

The above is a front view of the house of Rev. Thomas Hooker, first minister of the gospel in Connecticut. The projection in front (A) was called the porch, and was used as his study. The building stood on the north side of School street, and the drawing was taken immediately before it was taken down.





ity, but with the same joys and sorrows, problems and needs, as the little village of long ago.

What changes, too, has this Meeting House of today seen in the manner of life in the town, what cherished customs discarded, what new foibles adopted! Until the middle of the nineteenth century the Meeting House itself spoke daily to those who lived within the sound of its voice, ringing out its signal for a noonday pause in the day's work, and again a curfew in the evening. For many years the bells of the First and Second Churches rang out their message together, striking alternately, each waiting for the other, and then joining to tell with one voice the day of the month. The differences which one hundred years have brought in the life of the townspeople are too familiar to need repetition, and yet amazing when we pause to consider them. From stage coach to aeroplane, from post-rider to telephone, from singing school and quilting party to night club and moving picture, from the little red schoolhouse to the huge modern high school and business school, from simple home industry to giant factory and modern office, through all the years that have brought about these changes, the Meeting House has stood on the Main Street and watched, eagerly welcoming some of the changes, and stoutly opposed to some which it could not approve. All the complicated organization of modern city life for the welfare of the people and for the relief of suffering and poverty, for educational and cultural opportunities, for civic beauty and order—all this is the development almost wholly of the last century. The hospitals, the Christian Associations, practically all of the charitable institutions and funds, the libraries, the museums, the parks—all have come long since the present Meeting House was built.

These Meeting Houses which through all the years have watched over the Main Street, how have they been companioned on the way by other houses of worship? For over thirty years from the settlement of the town, the small crude structure of the second Meeting House stood alone on the square, the center of the religious, political and social life of the town. In 1670, the first daughter of the First Church, born of much travail of soul and some bitterness, erected the Meeting House of the Second Church, and through all the two and one-half centuries since, the two, called for many years the South Meeting House and the North Meeting House, have stood together on the Main Street. In 1702 another daughter church was set off in East Hartford, and in 1713 one in West Hartford, but still the two Meeting Houses stood alone in the town. Not until some time after the Revolution were churches of other denominations fully organized, and other church buildings erected. Dr. Hawes records in his bicentennial address, "A little more than forty years ago there were but two places of public worship within the limits of the city; now there are eleven." During the nineteenth century four daughter churches were organized in the town, the North Church in 1824, the Fourth in 1832, the Pearl Street in 1852 and the Asylum Hill in 1865. It was after the formation of the North Church that the Meeting House of the First Church, which had long been known as the "North Meeting House," came to be familiarly called "Center Church." In a sermon in 1836 Dr. Hawes says, "The mother rejoices to see her children springing up and prospering around her—and she prays that grace, mercy and peace may be multiplied to all of every name, that love our Lord Jesus Christ."

During the latter half of the nineteenth century probably a dozen church buildings stood on the Main Street, between



the South Green and Morgan Street. More than fifty years ago, the population of the city was rapidly spreading westward, the residence centers were moving farther and farther from the Main Street, and there was a growing feeling that the churches must follow. Before the close of the century this feeling found expression in action. One after another the churches took their stand farther out, or united with other congregations, until the number on the Main Street has been very much reduced. But still the Meeting House of the First Church, though its parish extends for miles in every direction, stands at its post, guarding the graves of the first settlers and sending out its call to worship. Still it watches the life of the city and lends its gracious presence to the Main Street, giving its blessing to all who pass its stately old porch, remembering the past, inspiring the present and hoping for the future.

### CHAPTER III

## *The Ministers*

### *Thomas Hooker*

THE FIRST MINISTER of the Church was called by Cotton Mather in the "Magnalia", "the light of the western churches." His name and fame have come down through three hundred years of history bringing a vivid impression of a strong personality, an able preacher, a magnetic leader, and a far-seeing statesman of both Church and State.

Thomas Hooker was born at Marfield in Leicester County, England, on July 7, 1586. There is little information available as to his family or ancestry. His mother lived in the parish of Tilton, within the bounds of which Marfield is located and died in that parish in 1631. His father died in 1635, and the registry of these deaths and burials in the records of Tilton Parish is the only knowledge we have of his parents.

The young man who had grown up in his native village set himself to secure an education. Emmanuel College at Cambridge was sympathetic toward the Puritan movement among the churches in England, and to this college he came as a candidate for education in 1604 to undertake his university course. He completed his work for the bachelor's degree in 1608 and for the master's degree in 1611. He continued at Cambridge as a resident Fellow of Emmanuel

College during the immediately succeeding years. He was associated there with several men who later served as ministers in New England while he was rendering his service in the ministry in Newtown and in Hartford.

While resident as a fellow at Cambridge, Mr. Hooker rendered some service as an occasional preacher or lecturer in parish churches of the vicinity and presumably expected to be ordained to the regular ministry of the Church of England and to complete his life work as a parish minister.

The temper of the times, however, was such that he was led far afield from this early expectation. Before 1620 he was appointed to serve as rector in the small parish of Esher in Surrey, about sixteen miles southwest of London.

Here the young minister, trained by his years of study and association at Cambridge, began his life work. He was received into the home of a certain Mr. Drake, a man of some importance in the community, and to Mrs. Drake he rendered the service of pastor and friend during a long illness which she suffered. In this home he found his wife Susanna and here he was married. Mrs. Hooker, a woman of grace and cultivation, cast in her lot with the young minister, perhaps being won to an appreciation of his qualities by perceiving the sympathy and strength with which he ministered to Mrs. Drake.

After a period of service at Esher, Mr. Hooker accepted an invitation to serve as Lecturer in the Church of Saint Mary's in Chelmsford in the County of Essex. Chelmsford was a market town, twenty-nine miles east of London, and here in the historic parish church of the town, which has in recent years been raised to the dignity of a cathedral church, he rendered service in connection with the rector of the parish.

Such a lectureship as that to which he was appointed was a feature of many churches of this period in those parts



of England where the Puritan movement had reached some strength. It had become the practice for those who sympathized with the Puritan position to unite in supporting a lecturer who might be attached to the parish and who preached on Sunday afternoons and on market days. The sermons of such lecturers were expositions of the Christian teaching and way of life from the Puritan point of view. The authorities of the established Church were not sympathetic to the practice of the employment of lecturers. In 1622 an injunction had been set forth by the Crown through the Archbishop forbidding any lecturer under the standing of "a bishop or dean to presume to preach in any popular auditory on the deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, or of the universality, efficacy, resistibility or irresistibility of God's grace." The injunction further restricted the preaching of such lecturers to the "Catechism, Creed or Ten Commandments." Later, in 1626 a further injunction was set forth by the Crown at the instigation of the ecclesiastical authorities forbidding discussion of any opinions not specifically set forth in the Articles of the Church.

Mr. Hooker's work as lecturer in Chelmsford attracted no little attention in that town and in surrounding towns. He spoke with vigor and with power, denouncing the evils of the times, declaring the imminent judgments of God for the wrongs that were being committed on the part of the government and on the part of the people and set forth a conception of the Christian life which appealed greatly to the conscience and the intelligence of his hearers. It was in his ministry in this lectureship that he was described by one who heard his preaching, as a man "who while doing his Master's work would put a king in his pocket."

Such bold preaching was not long tolerated by the authorities of Church and State without vigorous protest

and demands for suppression. The authorities sought to silence the preacher and in response his own spirit rose and he spoke even more boldly. In turn this stirred the people to yet greater devotion to him and to his ministry. The Chancellor of the Archbishop in 1629 reported concerning a visit which was made to Chelmsford and an effort to persuade the preacher to change the tenor of his message. The messenger, who was Vicar of Braintree, the Reverend Samuel Collins, reported to the Chancellor, "Since my return from London I have spoken with Mr. Hooker, but I have small hope of prevailing with him. All the favour he desires is that my Lord of London would not bring him into the High Commission Court but permit him quietly to depart out of the Diocese. All men's ears are now filled with the obstreperous clamours of his followers against my Lord, as a man endeavouring to suppress good preaching and advance Popery. All would be here very calme and quiet if he might depart. If he be suspended it is the resolution of his friends and himself to settle his abode in Essex. Maintenance is promised him in plentiful manner for the fruition of his private conference, which hath already more impeached the peace of our Church than his publique ministry. His genius will still haunte all the pulpits in the country where any of his scholars may be admitted to preach. There be divers young ministers about us that spend their time in conference with him and return home and preach what he hath brewed. I have lived in Essex to see many changes, and have seen the people idolizing many new ministers and lecturers, but this man surpasses them all for learning and some other considerable partes, and gains more and far greater followers than all before him. If my Lord tender his owne future peace let him connive at Mr. Hooker's departure."

On November 10 of this same year, 1629, forty-nine



ministers of the district about Chelmsford sent to Archbishop Laud a petition favorable to Mr. Hooker in the following terms, "Whereas we have heard that your honour has been informed against Mr. Thomas Hooker, preacher at Chelmsford, that the conformable ministers of these partes desire his removal from the place, we, whose names are here under written, being ministers of the partes adjoining, all beneficed men obedient to His Majesty's ecclesiastical laws, doe humbly give your lordship to understand that we all esteeme and knowe the said Mr. Thomas Hooker to be, for doctryne orthodox, and life and conversion honest, his disposition peaceable, no wayes turbulent or factious, and so not doubting but he will contynue that good course, commending him and his lawful suite to your lordship's honourable favour, we humbly take our leave and remain your honour's, humbly at command." These records show us how marked an impression Mr. Hooker's preaching had made in Chelmsford and its vicinity.

The Archbishop's mind was set against Mr. Hooker and his opinions, and he was forced by ecclesiastical authority to give up his lectureship in Chelmsford and to withdraw from the town to a small village called Little Baddow about four miles away, where he conducted a school "in his own hired house." It was here that John Eliot became his pupil. In the "Magnalia," Mather quotes Eliot's testimony as to his teacher, "To this place I was called through the infinite riches of God's mercy in Christ Jesus to my poor soul; for here the Lord said unto my dead soul 'live,' and through the grace of Christ, I do live and I shall live forever. When I came to this family I then saw, and never before, the power of Godliness in its lively vigour and efficacy."

In the following year, 1630, Mr. Hooker was summoned to appear before the High Commission Court. Knowing the penalties that would be visited upon him if he should give himself up to this Court in their prejudiced state of mind, he decided to flee from England and take refuge in Holland where the Pilgrims and so many Puritans had found safety in the preceding years.

From 1629 to 1633 Mr. Hooker lived in Holland, at first in Amsterdam, later in Delft, and in Rotterdam. He engaged in some preaching in the Puritan colonies in these Dutch cities but like other Puritans from England, found himself ill at ease in the strange country, surrounded by men of a different speech and under some suspicion even on the part of some of his own fellow countrymen whose theological and political opinions were not altogether in sympathy with his own.

Meantime his former supporters in Chelmsford, a considerable group gathered by their interest in him and his preaching, had formed a determination to make the great adventure of emigration to the new world. It is probable that they had projected such an understanding before Mr. Hooker left them in 1629. At any rate they determined to seek his leadership and through messengers entered into negotiations with him during his residence in Holland. They secured his consent to follow them to New England and in 1632 they made the journey across the sea. His personal influence was dominant among them, as is witnessed by the fact that when they arrived in Massachusetts Bay and were assigned to make their settlement at Newtown, they were known as "Mr. Hooker's Company." They awaited his coming and in the following year, 1633, he followed them and arrived in Boston on September 4, accompanied by Samuel Stone, who was the choice of the Newtown Church



as his associate in the office of Teacher of the Church, John Cotton, who became the Minister of the Church in Boston, and John Haynes, who later became governor both of Massachusetts and of Connecticut.

On October 11, 1633, Mr. Hooker and Mr. Stone were formally recognized as Pastor and Teacher of the Church at Newtown. Their recognition was a virtual ordination and they were established as the leaders of the new community in its ecclesiastical organization.

Here at Newtown Mr. Hooker took leadership among the people and represented them as minister in any assemblies of representatives of the churches of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1636 Mr. Hooker came with the greater part of the Newtown community to the Connecticut Valley and located with them as their Pastor in Hartford. This pilgrimage has become famous in the history of New England and is a remarkable witness to the courage both of the Minister and of the people who followed him upon this adventure.

Mr. Hooker's leadership of the Church in Hartford is part of the history of the Colony and of the State. His own description of the spirit of the migration and of the hopes with which they came was given in a Thanksgiving sermon preached by him in 1638, "It was a sad, sharp winter with us in these western parts, that many lost their lives, not only cattle, but men. But the Lord delivered us. Men concluded it, many confirmed it, never any vessel came to these parts but the Lord brought it safe. It was the Lord, brethren, that brought it; it was the Lord that guided it, and truly, had it not been for the Lord we might have perished. If anything could have hindered, either by truth or falsehood, to keep men from coming to these parts hitherto, it had been done; but yet, men's minds informed,

their consciences convicted, their hearts persuaded, to come and to plant."

Mr. Hooker retained the respect and high regard of the churches of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was summoned back to Boston for the synod which was held in 1637 to consider the case of Ann Hutchinson and was one of the moderators chosen at that synod. Again in May 1639, in September 1643 and in July 1645, he made the journey to Boston upon business connected with the welfare of the churches.

In the Hartford community Mr. Hooker's vigorous preaching sustained the courage of the Church and Colony, and his leadership in the community led to the establishment of the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut in 1639, of which mention has already been made.

Mr. Hooker died at the age of sixty-one, honored and beloved by all his people and by all the scattered communities then established in New England. The Church grieved for his loss and set itself to face the future inspired by his brave spirit.

He left a considerable number of published volumes, chiefly sermons, some of which were preached in Chelmsford before his coming to America and some in Hartford. These interesting volumes give his characteristic message which was the interpretation of the Gospel applied to the experience of life. He left also a manuscript published after his death, entitled, "A Survey on the Summe of church Discipline," which was a description of the way of the Churches of New England, showing them to have been formed and guided by Scriptural principles in their organization and conduct. It is an amazing thing that he should have been able to accomplish so much writing and publication in connection with the arduous duties of his pastorate.



An excellent biography of Thomas Hooker has been provided in the work of Dr. George Leon Walker, the historian of the Church. A complete and adequate account of his preaching and of his influence upon the political ideas and ideals of his time, is yet to be written.

The Church which was gathered around his influence and under the leadership of his personality remembers him with profound gratitude and honors him with a loyal and abiding devotion to the principles which he so ably proclaimed.

### *Samuel Stone*

Samuel Stone, associated with Thomas Hooker as the first Teacher of the Church and the only man so definitely recognized in its history, became the second Minister. Upon the death of Mr. Hooker, it was natural that the Church should turn to him in whom they had already learned to have great confidence and ask him to carry on the work which was left by Mr. Hooker. Samuel Stone was born in Hertford, England, in 1602. He graduated from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, with the bachelor's degree in 1624 and received his master's degree at the same college in 1627. He studied for the work of the ministry at Aspen in Essex, near Braintree. In 1630, Mr. Stone, a young man of twenty-eight years, was appointed Lecturer for the Puritan community in the parish of Towcester. Here he served until he joined Mr. Hooker on the journey to New England, upon invitation of the community which was to become the Church in Newtown and in Hartford.

During the sojourn in Newtown from 1633 to 1636 and during the ministry of Mr. Hooker in Hartford, Mr. Stone served as the Teacher of the Church. The distinction between the pastor and the teacher presumably was not

very clear. It was defined by Richard Mather in the following terms: "And for the teacher and pastor, the difference between them lyes in this that one is principally to attend upon points of Knowledge and Doctrine though not without application, and the other to points of practice, though not without doctrine." Dr. Walker observes, "It is obvious that the distinction between these two offices was an obscure one and that each was likely to be continually taking on the features of the other. The pastor could not preach much without dealing with matters of doctrine, and the teacher could not instruct long without dealing with matters of practice." A contemporary record gives us a contrasted impression of the two men who served the Hartford Church as "grave, godly and judicious Hooker" and "rhetorical Mr. Stone."

During Mr. Hooker's ministry, Mr. Stone's influence was naturally much less than that of his senior, but it is a witness of the devotion of the people to him that when they came to choose a name for the new community on the banks of the Connecticut, they chose the name of his birth-place and the name Hartford, slightly changed from the Hertford of old England, is a memorial to Samuel Stone.

Mr. Stone continued his ministry after the death of Mr. Hooker in 1647 for thirteen years in sole charge of the Church, for it was not until 1660 that an associate was secured to share the work with him. Meantime several others were asked to serve the Church as associated with Mr. Stone, but no one of these arrangements resulted in a permanent engagement.

Mr. Stone was a man of broad sympathies and spritely mind. Some few writings from his hand remain to us and the impression made by him upon his contemporaries was that of a generous, humane spirit which was able to overcome



even the difficulties of a long dissension which shadowed his ministry and which resulted in the removal of a small part of the Church to Hadley, Massachusetts.

*John Whiting*

John Whiting became Pastor of the Church in association with Mr. Stone in 1660. His father was a citizen of Hartford and had been intrusted with public responsibility as treasurer of the Colony. Mr. Whiting was born in 1635 and went to Newtown for his education in one of the early classes of the newly established college. He graduated from Harvard in 1653 and was married in Cambridge to the daughter of a deacon of the Church which had succeeded to the place left by the Hartford Church upon its migration. Mr. Whiting served as assistant minister in the Church at Salem from 1657 to 1659.

He came to enter into association with Mr. Stone reviving the practice of the Church in having two ministers, one to serve as Pastor and one as Teacher in the congregation. The condition of Mr. Stone's health was such that Mr. Whiting took over upon his arrival the greater part of the work of preaching and so did not distinguish his ministry from that of the Pastor by attempting to serve as Teacher in distinction from the pastoral office. In 1663 upon the death of Mr. Stone, the Church promptly chose an associate for Mr. Whiting in person of John Haynes. Mr. Whiting and Mr. Haynes then entered upon the dual ministry, which it was hoped would be as happy as the joint service of Mr. Hooker and Mr. Stone in the first years of the settlement.

This fair hope was disappointed for within a short time after the dual ministry had been established a dispute arose in the Church and unfortunately the Ministers were

divided by the issue which developed. Through the years from 1666 to 1670 this dispute troubled the Church with its turmoil. The question had to do with the admission of members into the Church and the development of the so-called Halfway-Covenant. Dr. Walker has described the issue of this division. It was the Puritan theory of the Church as stated by Mr. Hooker that "visible saints only are fit matter appointed by God to make up a visible church of Christ." "But," says Dr. Walker, "the founders of these churches had come from lands where a different theory of membership prevailed. All the baptized inhabitants of an English, German or Geneva parish were accounted members of the there existing church even without manifesting Christian character. This was the condition of things against which the New England fathers desired to guard. They attempted to do it by vigorously applying at the door of the churches which they established, tests of visible saintship found in general character." But the tests that were applied became in practice so stern that a considerable number of people felt that they could not submit themselves to such tests or were found unequal to them when applied, and the membership of the Church tended to be but a limited group within the community. Since in some New England communities civil rights were in part dependent upon church membership, there was a definite desire in many churches to provide some form of membership for which the tests should not be so severe. As early as 1649, Thomas Shepard of Cambridge is reported as saying, "that children are members of the visible church and that their membership continues when they are adult, and that the children of believers are to be accounted of the church until they positively reject the Gospel, and that the membership of children hath no tendency in it to pollute the church any



more now than under the Old Testament, and that children are under church discipline, and that some persons adult may be admitted to baptism and yet not to the Lord's Supper." Here in these statements we have described the Halfway-Covenant privilege which was used in many early churches of New England.

Much opposition to the growth of this practice was expressed by a minority of ministers and laymen.

A synod of delegates from the Massachusetts churches held in Boston in 1662 took action approving the use of the so-called "Halfway-Covenant," and with this recognition the Connecticut churches, though not represented in the synod, were led to adopt the practice which it had approved. This was done not without vigorous protest and the conflict between the two opinions was made sharp by the fact that in the Hartford Church the senior minister Mr. Whiting and his colleague Mr. Haynes were divided upon the issue. Mr. Whiting desired to continue in the older and more strict practice of limiting the membership to those who should make a full confession of Christian faith and submit to tests as to character and opinion. Mr. Haynes inclined to the broader practice of the Halfway-Covenant.

The division between the Ministers and in the Church became so marked that in 1669 representatives of the churches of Connecticut towns advised that the Hartford Church be divided and that the minority which followed Mr. Whiting in the older opinion should withdraw to establish a second church in Hartford. Accordingly, on the twenty-second of February, 1670, Mr. Whiting and thirty-one members of the Church withdrew and established the Second Church of Christ in Hartford, declaring as they

did so, as the first principle in their statement of the reasons for their action, their adherence to the declaration of Mr. Hooker "that visible saints are the only fit matter and confederation the form of a visible church."

It is, as Dr. Walker observes, a surprising fact that the Second Church of Christ, which was established in devotion to the older Congregational way did not continue in their opinion and that the Second Church almost immediately began to use the Halfway-Covenant, admitting to baptism the children of persons who had not been received into full church membership and welcoming into fellowship those who were willing to own the covenant without a declaration of a personal Christian experience.

Mr. Whiting's service with the First Church concluded with this division. He continued as Minister of the Second Church for nineteen years until his death in 1689. His witness to the truth as he saw it was a valuable contribution to the ecclesiastical history of the Colony. His notable service as first Pastor of the Second Church of Christ is a testimony to the quality of his preaching and life.

### *John Haynes*

John Haynes who was called by the Church to serve as associate with Mr. Whiting came to this service in 1664. His father was John Haynes the governor of the Colony, and his mother was Mabel Harlackenden. Born in Hartford in 1641 he, like his senior colleague Mr. Whiting, was a graduate of Harvard. After his graduation in 1658 he spent some time in private study in Cambridge and in Hartford. We know that in 1663 and 1664 he preached in the church in Wethersfield. In the latter year he came to his work in Hartford in the Church of his father and of his own childhood.



After the division of the Church in 1670, he continued as its sole Pastor. The Church did not undertake to call an associate. Probably the experience of the preceding years discouraged any movement in that direction. Mr. Haynes served nine years as sole Pastor of the Church.

He had married Sarah Lord in Hartford in 1668. He died in 1679 at the early age of thirty-eight, having served the Church fifteen years. Like his predecessors in the pastorate, Mr. Hooker, Mr. Stone, and Mr. Whiting, he was buried in the burying ground of the town, where his grave is beside that of his father, the honored governor of the Colony.

Besides the records which have to do with the division in the Church, there is little that remains to inform us of the life of the Church during Mr. Haynes' ministry. We remember him chiefly because in him a dominant influence in the life of the churches generally and of this Church in particular came to vivid expression.

*Isaac Foster*

After the death of Mr. Haynes came the brief ministry of Isaac Foster. In his "Centennial Discourse" of 1836, in the account of the two hundredth anniversary of the arrival of "Mr. Hooker's company" in Hartford, Dr. Hawes says of Mr. Foster, "The late Dr. Strong remarked of him that he was eminent for piety and died young. This is the only record that remains of him, and though brief, it is honorable and places him among the just whose memory is blessed."

Dr. Walker's careful reading of all the available historical records discovered various other facts concerning

Isaac Foster, which we may note in brief. He was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1652 and graduated from Harvard at the age of nineteen in 1671. He adventured with his father, a sea captain, on a distant voyage soon after his graduation and was captured by pirates in the fall of that same year. After a distressing experience he was rescued and returned to his home in Charlestown. Later he became a fellow at Harvard and during the use of his fellowship exercised his gifts as a preacher. He appears to have made a favorable impression and was invited to serve the Church at Barnstable. This appointment, however, was not consummated and later on Mr. Foster was in negotiation with the Church in Windsor, Connecticut. He did not undertake the pastorate at Windsor, evidently being well satisfied with his work and opportunities as a fellow at the college. A little later, in 1679, the Church in Hartford invited him to serve in place of Mr. Haynes. He came to his work here with the enthusiasm of youth, well seasoned by the various experiences through which he had passed. His wife was Mabel Wyllys, a niece of his predecessor in the pastorate and a granddaughter of Governor George Wyllys. He evidently made a strong impression upon the community by his labors in the pastorate, and his sudden death in 1682 led Simon Bradstreet to say of him in his journal, "His death has made such a breach y<sup>t</sup> it will not easily be made up." And Mr. Whiting of the Second Church wrote of his death that it was "a surprising and very awful stroake to us."

The Church is fortunate to have a tangible memorial of Mr. Foster in his Hebrew Bible which came into its possession through the hands of Professor Williston Walker some years ago.



*Timothy Woodbridge*

Timothy Woodbridge succeeded Isaac Foster in 1685. His father, John Woodbridge, had come to New England in 1634 and had served as Minister of the Church in Andover, Massachusetts. Later he returned to England and there his son Timothy was born in 1653. In 1663 his father came again to this country and served in Newbury, Massachusetts.

Mr. Woodbridge graduated from Harvard in 1675 and presumably spent the time until his call to Hartford in study under the direction of his father. His ministry here was an extended one, reaching from 1685 to 1732. His sermons that remain to us indicate that he was a man of keen practical interest in the application of Christianity to life. We have certain of his election sermons and in them we find that he gave cordial endorsement to the project of a school for Indian children. It is interesting to find in the Church records that in 1711 he baptized an Indian boy whom he called "my Indian servant" and adds, "I publicly engaged that I would take care he should be brought up in the Christian Religion."

Mr. Woodbridge's interest in education was to have far greater issue in his sharing in 1698 in the efforts of a group of Connecticut ministers to establish a college in Connecticut. With other Harvard men he took up the project for a college in the Colony with enthusiasm. He was one of those who, when the plan was well considered, met at Branford in 1700 and laid each a quota of books upon a table saying, "I give these books for the founding of a College in this Colony."

In the following years Mr. Woodbridge had part in the discussion and even disputes which arose concerning the permanent location of the new institution. Along with

Mr. Buckingham of the Second Church, he contended for the location of the college within the bounds of the so-called Connecticut Colony, and held that it might well find its permanent place for service in Wethersfield. In time, it is recorded, both Mr. Woodbridge and Mr. Buckingham became very friendly to the college at New Haven, and as an original trustee the former was made presiding officer at Commencement in the year 1723.

Mr. Woodbridge was active in the development of the organization of the churches and ministers of the Colony. In 1709 two such organizations, known as Consociations, were formed in Hartford County, in one of which he served as Moderator almost continuously until his death. He was also Moderator of the General Association of the Colony at a meeting held in Fairfield in 1712.

Mr. Woodbridge was greatly concerned with the development of the spiritual life and moral influence of the churches in the Colony. He had share in declarations made by the associations of ministers, calling upon the people to recognize and conform to higher standards of public and private morality and in setting up committees of inquiry to consider the state of religion. Such a committee reported a lack of Bibles, a neglect of public worship, failure in Christian instruction and family government, and prevalent intemperance. This was in 1715.

Mr. Woodbridge continued his diligent labors through nearly forty-nine years, and died in 1732 at the age of seventy-nine. In his eulogy the Reverend Timothy Edwards said, "He was one of the principal men of his order in the land."

*Daniel Wadsworth*

In succession to Mr. Woodbridge there came very promptly to the service of the Church a young minister



whose pastorate, while not long continued, was significant in the story. Daniel Wadsworth was called on the twenty-eighth of June in 1732 by action of the Society, following upon the recommendation made to the Church by a special committee and upon the advice of "Reverend Elders of the Association." He was installed as Minister of the Church on September 28, 1732.

Having been born in Farmington and educated at Yale, where he graduated in 1726, he must have been well known in the congregation which thus entrusted him with the charge of its life and work at the early age of twenty-eight. It is probable that his special training for the work of the ministry was under the charge of Mr. Whitman, then Minister of the Church in Farmington, with whose son Mr. Wadsworth was a classmate at Yale.

Mr. Wadsworth's service met with immediate response on the part of the Church and the community and less than a year from the time of his installation the project of a new Meeting House was taken up and seemed likely to be carried through promptly. The proposed site, however, was not acceptable to some of the congregation and it was not until eleven years later that the dispute over the location was settled and the work actually begun. In 1739 the new Meeting House was completed on the southeast corner of the Burying Ground on the west side of Main Street.

In 1740 George Whitefield appeared in Connecticut and preached in many churches, including the new Meeting House of the First Church. On October 22, 1740, Mr. Wadsworth records in his diary, "This day Mr. Whitefield preached in y<sup>e</sup> forenoon to a vast Concourse of people here from rom. 14:17 verse. W<sup>t</sup> to think of y<sup>e</sup> man and his Itinerant preachings I scarcely know." This visit of Whitefield must have absorbed much of Mr. Wadsworth's attention in

the years following and he must have had considerable part in the discussions as to the value of Whitefield's ministry. He probably shared in the general feeling that the preaching of the English evangelist was not helpful to the development of the Christian life of the Connecticut communities. At the time of Whitefield's second preaching visit to New England in 1745, the Hartford North Association warned its ministers to refuse him opportunity to use their pulpits. As Mr. Wadsworth records, "This day went to y<sup>e</sup> association at Windsor. y<sup>e</sup> association agreed upon a Testimony ag<sup>t</sup>. Mr. Whitefield."

Mr. Wadsworth died in 1747, after several years of ill health, leaving his wife, who was the daughter of Governor Joseph Talcott, and six children. His diary, which was discovered among old papers at the Connecticut Historical Society in 1892, is a prosaic record, but reveals his diligence in pastoral duties and in attendance upon the various ministerial meetings of the vicinity and also his friendly intercourse with the other ministers of the Colony. For the last four years of his life he served as a trustee of Yale College.

*Edward Dorr*

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Edward Dorr was born in Lyme, Connecticut, in 1722. He was graduated from Yale College in the class of 1742 and received his license to preach from the New Haven Association in 1744. His first pastorate was in the Church in Kensington where he served from 1744 to 1747 under disturbed conditions because of factions in the parish. In 1747 he was asked to supply the pulpit of the First Church in Hartford during the disability of Mr. Wadsworth.

After the latter's death the Church and Society, with the advice of the Association, invited Mr. Dorr to become the



Pastor, and after considerable negotiation he accepted the call and was installed April 27, 1748. He married, shortly after his settlement in Hartford, Helena, the daughter of the former Governor Joseph Talcott.

The stress and strain of the controversies which grew out of the Great Awakening characterized the life of the Church during Mr. Dorr's pastorate. Dr. Walker has called these years from 1748 through the first part of Nathan Strong's pastorate the "Years of the Great Decline." But this was not due to any lack of ability or devotion on the part of these two ministers. There was a reaction from the intensity of the period of the Great Awakening. The General Association of Connecticut passed resolution after resolution calling upon the ministers to take definite steps against the prevalent immoralities and the spread of vice. In the Church at Hartford Mr. Dorr sought as best he could, but without marked success, to turn the tide of life toward a more adequate appreciation of the Gospel and a greater loyalty to its ideals.

The burden of the war between the English and the French lay heavily upon the Colony. From three to six thousand men of Connecticut were in the service of the army through a period of seven years, and the burdens of taxation were exceedingly great. Following the conclusion of the war came the unrest which led up to the war of the Revolution. One can imagine the distractions which such a development must have caused in the congregations of the Colony and certainly the Church at Hartford was not insulated from the effects of the social and political thought of the time.

Through all these difficulties Mr. Dorr exercised his ministry with devotion and fidelity. He was of an evangelistic spirit and urged strongly the duty that he felt should



*Nathan Strong*





be recognized by the Church to spread the Gospel among the Indians. He felt that there was no likelihood of security for the Colony until this Christian duty should be performed. He commended the work of Eleazar Wheelock for the establishment of a school for Indians at Lebanon and his support of this project was of very considerable help to Mr. Wheelock in the development of the school which ultimately became Dartmouth College.

In 1769 Mr. Dorr suffered an illness which hindered him from carrying on the full work of the Church. Arrangements were made from time to time to aid him, but he did not recover his strength and after a long illness died in 1772, having served the Church twenty-four years.

*Nathan Strong*

After a brief interval of something more than a year Mr. Dorr was succeeded in the pastorate by Nathan Strong. Mr. Strong came to his work with the Church when but twenty-five years of age. He was the son of the Reverend Nathan Strong of Coventry, Connecticut, a classmate at Yale of Edward Dorr. His mother was the granddaughter of the Reverend John Williams of Deerfield. His home in Coventry was one of devoted piety and both of his parents encouraged him toward the work of the ministry as he made his preparations for college. He graduated with the class of 1769 at Yale, where he was a classmate of Timothy Dwight, later the president of the college, and where he shared with Mr. Dwight in the honors conferred for scholarship. Mr. Strong evidently expected to devote himself to the work of the law even though his parents had earnestly hoped that he would enter the ministry. Within a short time, however, his purpose was changed and he gave himself to the study of theology. He became a tutor at Yale in 1772

and was licensed to preach and occasionally served various churches of the vicinity. It was from this work as tutor that he was called to the service of the Hartford Church.

Entering upon his work with his ordination, June 1774, the young minister found himself faced with great ecclesiastical and political problems. He threw himself energetically into the movement for the Revolution and became a chaplain of the army. We are not informed as to how far his duties took him from home. Presumably he did not serve continuously with the forces in the field.

The Church and the Pastor together had to face the difficulties into which the country was thrown by the Revolutionary War. The currency was depreciated, the tides of popular feeling were controlled by other than religious matters and the Minister had great difficulty in continuing the activities of the Church during so troubled a period.

Personal sorrows heavily shadowed his life. His wife, Ann Smith, to whom he was married in 1777, died in 1784. His second wife, Anna McCurdy of Lyme, whom he married in 1787, died in 1789. Two children survived the first marriage and one the second.

Mr. Strong became involved in business affairs which caused him considerable trouble, one of which, it is curious now to note, was a distilling business, into which he entered in partnership with his brother-in-law, Reuben Smith. These affairs were not prosperous and were manifestly a cause of very considerable embarrassment and distress to Mr. Strong.

The latter half of his pastorate, from about 1794, was relieved of those troubles and worries, and his work was rewarded with response on the part of the people and with generous recognition in the ecclesiastical and academic



world. The token of this recognition was a degree of Doctor of Divinity, which was conferred on Mr. Strong by the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University.

In 1799 he joined with Dr. Flint of the Second Church and Joseph Steward, a member and deacon of the First Church in the publication of the "Hartford Selection of Hymns." This hymn book had wide usage, though it was succeeded in Dr. Strong's own congregation in 1812 by the compilation of hymns made by his Yale classmate, President Dwight.

Dr. Strong was foremost among the ministers who in 1797 formed a missionary society and united, in the following year, in merging their somewhat tentative efforts with the Missionary Society of Connecticut, formed by the General Association in 1798. This oldest of the missionary societies of our churches bears witness to the evangelical fervor and the missionary zeal of the ministers associated with Dr. Strong in this early effort.

The "Connecticut Evangelical Magazine" was another effort of Dr. Strong to extend his ministry beyond his own parish. Later on he shared with other ministers and with laymen in the establishment of The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810.

During Dr. Strong's ministry two important steps were taken in the history of the Church. One was the establishment of a parochial fund, which was the beginning of the permanent endowment of the Church and the other, the building of the new Meeting House, which has continued as a legacy of the parish of Dr. Strong's time to our own generation. He died on Dec. 25, 1816, having served the Church nearly forty-three years. Notable was this ministry and significant for the future of the First Church.

*Joel Hawes*

Joel Hawes became a characteristic figure of Hartford during the first half of the nineteenth century. He came to the Church as its Pastor in 1817. He was born in Medway, Massachusetts and educated at Brown University.

His coming to the Church was the result of considerable negotiations and after a period of some months, during which the Church had been supplied by occasional preachers, he entered upon his ministry with the feeling that the Church was in a very deplorable condition. And it is certainly true that the records and probably the organization were considerably disordered, but the ministry of Nathan Strong had developed a strong constituency which was ready to welcome Mr. Hawes and give willing support to the young minister's many plans for effectively organizing and diligently promoting the life of the Church.

Mr. Hawes stimulated remarkably successful revivals, the first of which appears to have been experienced two years after he entered his pastorate. Dr. Lyman Beecher came to his assistance in such a revival in 1820 and in 1826 still another was experienced. In 1827 he preached a series of discourses for young men, which were later published as "Lectures to Young Men," a volume that had a large circulation. Shortly after their publication, he was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Brown University. In 1834, 1841, 1852, and 1858 groups of people in considerable numbers, from fifty to one hundred, were brought into the Church in these revival movements.

In 1831 Dr. Hawes took a journey to Europe and in 1843 he received a leave of absence from the Church and made a journey to the Near East, accompanying his daughter, Mary, and her husband, the Reverend Henry Van Lennep, to the field of her missionary service in Smyrna.



*Joel Hawes*





Upon this journey Dr. Hawes carried a special commission from the American Board to visit the missions in Turkey. Mrs. Van Lennep had very brief service as a missionary. She died in 1844 within a few months from the time her father left her in her home on the field. Dr. Hawes suffered the loss of all his six children before his own death. The only other to reach maturity was Erskine Joel, a graduate of Yale in 1851 and of Andover Seminary in 1855. He was ordained a minister in Plymouth, Connecticut, in 1858 and was killed by the kick of his horse in 1860.

The evangelical spirit of Dr. Hawes was expressed not only by activity in promoting the parish and in the extension of church organization in the town but also in his missionary interest. He gave wise counsel to the Missionary Society of Connecticut, became a member of the American Board in 1838 and continued his activity in that organization throughout his life. He gave earnest and diligent attention to the development of missionary zeal in the congregation and doubtless his influence is still felt in the characteristic missionary outlook of the Church.

Dr. Hawes served the Church during the difficult period of the Civil War, and the burden it threw upon him was such that it seemed wise to secure a colleague to assist him in the labor. In 1862 Mr. Wolcott Calkins was installed as associate pastor of the Church. He was a graduate of Yale in 1856 and of Union Seminary in 1859. He had studied in Europe during the two years preceding his location in Hartford.

After a brief experience as associate pastor, Dr. Calkins resigned in 1864, having won a host of friends in the congregation and the community, where his further service in Philadelphia, in Buffalo, and in Newton, Massachusetts, was followed with sympathetic and affectionate interest.

Dr. Hawes continued as Emeritus Pastor of the Church after Dr. Calkins resigned and preached occasionally in its pulpit and more often in other pulpits in the vicinity. He died in 1867 in the seventy-eighth year of his age and certainly deserved the epitaph that we read upon his tablet in the Meeting House, "A vigorous, devoted, and successful minister of Christ."

*George H. Gould*

In the autumn of 1864 the Church called George H. Gould, then Minister in Olivet Church in Springfield. Mr. Gould was a graduate of Amherst College and Union Seminary. He came to the service of the Church during the Civil War when the feelings of the people were deeply stirred by many tragic experiences. He was a preacher of remarkable power, and during the five years of his service, one hundred and six members were received into the Church on confession of faith and one hundred and sixty-two by letter, facts which testify that his message and ministry met well the situation in the Church and the community in the period that marked the conclusion of the Civil War and the years immediately following.

It was during his pastorate that a devoted member of the Church, Mrs. Mary A. Warburton, built a chapel on Temple Street, which for nearly seventy years has stood to make her name blessed in this neighborhood. The land upon which the chapel was built was purchased by a fund secured by subscriptions of members of the Church.

In 1869 Dr. Gould offered his resignation to the Church on account of failing health. The Church asked him to withdraw it and he yielded to their request. However, in 1870 he renewed his petition and was relieved of his duties much to the regret of the congregation. He never recovered his health sufficiently to take another regular pastorate.





*George Leon Walker*



*Elias H. Richardson*

After the passage of somewhat more than a year, Elias H. Richardson of Westfield, Massachusetts, was called to the pastorate. He accepted the invitation and undertook his work in the year 1872. Mr. Richardson was a graduate of Dartmouth College and Andover Seminary. He had served churches in New Hampshire, Providence, and Westfield, Massachusetts. He came with fine enthusiasm to the work of the Church and served for six years and eight months. Large accessions to the membership witnessed to the earnestness of his preaching and especially to the acceptance of his ministry on the part of the young people. It was during his pastorate that notable evangelistic meetings were held in Hartford under the leadership of Dwight L. Moody and later under that of George H. Pentecost. In these meetings Dr. Richardson had much interest, throwing himself with enthusiasm into the work led by these widely known preachers of the Gospel.

Dr. Richardson resigned his parish in 1878 to accept the invitation of the First Church in New Britain, where he continued his ministry until his death in 1883. In his work both in Hartford and New Britain, Dr. Richardson made a deep impression upon the lives of many young people and contributed to the development of these two churches in large measure.

*George Leon Walker*

In 1879 the Church called George Leon Walker to the pastorate. Mr. Walker's preparation for the work of the ministry was unusual. His father, the Reverend Charles Walker, was pastor in Rutland, Vermont, where Mr. Walker was born in 1830. Later his father served in Brattleboro and there Mr. Walker grew up. His



early education was in the schools of Brattleboro and he hoped to go on to college for its completion. Illness, however, prevented his accomplishment of his purpose, which his determined spirit pursued in private study. By this means he acquired a thorough acquaintance with the subjects which would have been the substance of a college course if such a privilege had been granted him.

In 1850 he entered upon the study of law and served as clerk in the service of the Massachusetts State Government. After three years an attack of typhoid fever compelled him to relinquish the study of the law and he returned to Vermont, where his family had established their home in Pittsford. By this time Mr. Walker had determined to become a minister and made his purpose known to the ministers of the vicinity of his father's home. Recognizing his remarkable abilities and his determined spirit, the Rutland Association of Congregational Ministers licensed him to preach in 1857, when he was twenty-seven years of age. He entered Andover Theological Seminary and studied for a year as resident licentiate under the guidance of the able faculty of that institution.

He was called upon to supply the pulpit of the State Street Church in Portland, Maine, for a single Sunday and so impressed the congregation of that influential Church that a call was extended to him to become its Pastor. This call he accepted. Before undertaking his work he was married in the year 1858 to Maria Williston of Brattleboro. On the 13th of October of that year he was ordained in the State Street Church of Portland. Here he wrought a notable ministry, marked by his power in the pulpit and by his participation in public causes during the years immediately preceding the Civil War and during the course of that conflict. Here in 1865 Mrs. Walker died. In 1866 occurred the great Portland fire. As a result of these events

his health was seriously impaired and in the spring of 1867 he withdrew from active work in the hope that a rest would bring recovery. When autumn came he resigned the Portland pastorate because of ill health and was most reluctantly released from his duties by the Church.

In 1868, having somewhat recovered his strength, Mr. Walker was asked to supply the pulpit of the First Church of Christ in New Haven, Connecticut, from which historic pulpit, Dr. Leonard Bacon had recently retired. He was invited to undertake the pastorate of this Church and was there installed on November 18, 1868. His ministry in New Haven was notable as that in Portland had been for the power of his pulpit work and was recognized by the degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred upon him by Yale University in 1870. On September 15 of that same year, he married Amelia Read Larned of New Haven.

After a little less than five years of service in New Haven, Dr. Walker was again compelled by failing health to give up active work. He resigned his charge on May 19, 1873 and from the following October to November, 1874 he sought health and strength by residence in Europe. Upon his return he established his home in Brattleboro, Vermont, where during a residence of four years he served as acting Pastor of the Center Congregational Church.

From this work in Brattleboro, Dr. Walker came to his ministry in Hartford and was installed on February 27, 1879. At once his pulpit power, which had been in evidence in his former pastorates, was recognized in Hartford and he took his place among the influential ministers of the churches and among the leaders of the higher life of the city.

Inspired by the vigor of his ministry the Church discharged an accumulated indebtedness which rested upon it and prepared with eager anticipation for the two hundred



and fiftieth anniversary of the installation of its first Minister. This anniversary was celebrated in October 1883, the most significant event of the celebration being the historical address of the Minister himself. Out of this address prepared for the occasion, Dr. Walker developed a careful study of the entire history of the Church which has become its authoritative record. It was published in 1884 and has its place among the historical volumes dealing with the beginnings and history of the churches of New England. A further result of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Church was such a development of interest in the history of the Church and the community as brought about the restoration of the Ancient Burying Ground of the town.

Distinctive as were the more tangible results of Dr. Walker's work, the greatest elements of his ministry were the power of his preaching and the witness of his dauntless spirit. By his studies and his insight he had mastered the greater truths of the Christian faith and these he set forth in incisive terms and with a rare grace and virile and vibrant speech in the sermons he preached from his historic pulpit. He commanded the intelligence of his congregation and in a most unusual measure he was able to project the noble life of the spirit that was in him into the lives of his hearers.

Dr. Walker's able mind was recognized and called into service by the larger fellowship of the churches. This service was marked by his contribution as one of a commission of twenty-five that by direction of the National Council of the Congregational Churches set forth in 1883 a statement of faith and by his participation in debate and discussions in the meetings of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In 1887 at the meeting of the Board in Springfield and again in New York in



1889, his participation was so valuable in its wise counsel and judicious spirit that he was appointed chairman of an important committee which the Board developed on modifications in its policy in making missionary appointments. From 1887 to 1899 he served as a member of the corporation of Yale University and from 1888 to 1897, as a member of the Board of Visitors of Andover Theological Seminary.

After the anniversary of the Church in 1883 and the publication of the history in 1884, Dr. Walker continued his study of New England history. In 1891 he published the life of Thomas Hooker and in 1896 he delivered the Carew Lectures at the Hartford Theological Seminary on "Aspects of the Religious Life of New England." These lectures were published in 1897.

Throughout his Hartford ministry Dr. Walker suffered from physical disability. In 1882 he was invited to preach a sermon in commemoration of Dr. Leonard Bacon in New Haven. Shortly before the occasion of its delivery he broke his leg by a fall upon an icy pavement. In spite of this accident he delivered the sermon, though it was necessary for him to be seated in a chair at the pulpit as he preached. The courage with which he met this accident was but a manifestation of the high spirit with which he bore physical suffering and disability throughout his ministerial service. At length in 1892 even his determination could no longer enable him to carry the burden of the pastorate. Therefore he resigned his charge on June 12, and the Church reluctantly accepted the resignation, asking him to assume the title of Pastor Emeritus, which he bore throughout the remainder of his life.

Dr. Walker purchased from the Church the house on Prospect Street in which as the parsonage of the Church he had lived during the greater part of his pastorate and

continued to live there, pursuing his studies and enjoying his opportunities of meeting with his friends and grateful and loyal parishioners. In 1896 he suffered a further illness which by a strange fatality resulted in an inability to express himself in speech and in the paralysis of his right side. In 1898 his life was shadowed by the death of his wife whose inspiring companionship had been to him a constant comfort and help. Through all these infirmities, shocks and sorrows his life bore witness to the greatness and vitality of his faith and character. In his physical weakness he manifested spiritual strength. His life in the city he honored and loved and which in turn loved and honored him, and among the people of the Church that he served, was an abiding testimony to the truths he had preached from the pulpit which he had made a throne of power as well as a post of service. When it was possible for him to be brought to the Meeting House in his wheel chair and to share in the worship of his people, his presence was accounted a benediction and his memory is precious to all those who after the years are privileged so to remember him.

Dr. Walker died on March 14, 1900. His funeral was attended on March 16, in the Meeting House. Professor M. W. Jacobus, Dr. Edwin Pond Parker of the Second Church of Christ and the Reverend Joseph H. Twichell of the Asylum Hill Church conducted the service. The Church and the city alike sorrowed that they should see his face no more and rejoiced that he had won the final victory over the weakness of the flesh by the strength of his brave spirit.

*Charles M. Lamson*

Dr. Lamson was a son of the Connecticut Valley. He was born in North Hadley, Massachusetts, May 16, 1843. His father was a farmer and his early life was spent upon





*Charles Marion Lamson*





the farm where he engaged in work with his father and received the education of the public school. Later on he studied at the Hopkins Academy at Hadley and the Williston Seminary at Easthampton, Massachusetts, where he was prepared for his college course.

He was graduated with honors at Amherst College in the class of 1864. After his graduation he returned to Williston Seminary as a teacher. In this work he spent one year. He served as instructor in Latin at Amherst for two years. During this period he took a course of private study in theology and in English literature under the guidance of President Seelye.

This work as a teacher was interrupted in 1867 by a year's study in Germany, devoted to the subject of theology at the University of Halle. Returning to Amherst he served as a teacher in the department of English for another year, continuing his study of theology. In 1869 Dr. Lamson married Miss Helena F. Bridgman of Amherst, Massachusetts, whose ancestors were settled in Hartford as early as 1640. Mrs. Lamson at once entered with sympathetic enthusiasm into the work of her husband who in that same year had been called from his work as a professor of English at Amherst to the service of the Porter Congregational Church at Brockton, Massachusetts, as Pastor. Having served two years in Brockton, he accepted the call of the Salem Street Congregational Church at Worcester, Massachusetts. In this parish he served for fourteen years and his pulpit ministry and pastoral service found fruitage both in the marked growth of the congregation and in his increasing influence and responsibility in the life of the city.

The North Congregational Church at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, called Dr. Lamson to its pastorate in 1885. With

much regret at leaving the happy and useful relationships he had formed in Worcester, Dr. Lamson undertook the work thus offered him and served in St. Johnsbury for eight years. Here again both in the life of the Church of which he was the Minister and in the life of the community his influence was markedly felt and the inspiration of his life was given without reserve in the service of the Gospel. Especially notable was his influence upon the students of the St. Johnsbury Academy, which was one of the most influential of the preparatory schools in northern New England during this period.

When the First Church in Hartford was constrained by Dr. Walker's limitations of health and strength to accept his resignation, it turned to Dr. Lamson and invited him to become its Pastor. Again with regret at severing the ties which bound him to the Church where he was rendering so great a service he accepted the invitation of the Church in Hartford and took up the work in February in 1894. In the fullness of his strength he gave himself unreservedly to the work of his pastorate. His preaching was notable for its sympathetic insight into the lives of his people. His pastoral work was devoted, faithful and characterized by a deep understanding of the needs of those to whom he ministered.

On coming to the Church, Dr. Lamson took an especial interest in the Vesper Service which had been established in 1891. He had a rare gift for the preparation of liturgical orders of worship and was familiar with the finest liturgical usages of the Christian Church throughout its history. This gift he used in the preparation of an order of worship for the Vesper Service, which in its simplicity conformed to the historic Puritan character of the Church and in its beauty made profound appeal to the people of the commu-



nity. In cooperation with the director of music, Mr. Nathan H. Allen, he gave himself to the conduct of the Vesper Service with a fine and high enthusiasm. Mr. Allen wrote in a personal letter in 1915, "The Church went on to its crowning period in the pastorate of Dr. Lamson, when its music was ennobled by this great genius for effective service, whose like, as I believe, has never been seen in New England. What more fortunate accident could have happened to me than to be thrown into the company and cooperation with such a fertile inventor of worshipful means." During the years of his brief pastorate, while he served the congregation of the Church itself with a notable ministry from its pulpit in the morning service, he served richly a much wider constituency of the people of the city who thronged the Meeting House at the hour of the Vesper Service to receive at once the inspiration of the beauty of the music and of the brief, powerful and always beautiful messages of the vesper sermons.

Dr. Lamson was a man of broad sympathies and of the most earnest and practical type of Christian experience. This led him to a profound interest in the wider activities of the Church and of its denomination. He rendered faithful service to the Congregational Home Missionary Society as a member of its executive committee and to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which in October, 1897, elected him as its president in succession to Dr. Richard Salter Storrs of Brooklyn, New York.

His wide interests are further shown by the honor that was given him when he was chosen in 1892 to preach the sermon at the National Council of Congregational Churches at its meeting in Minneapolis and by the fact that he was a trustee of Amherst College at the time of his death. While he was Pastor in Worcester in 1885, the college had rec-

ognized his work by granting him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Mrs. Lamson's service to the Church was a notable contribution to its life. In personal relationships and in leadership of a large Bible class for the women of the Church she became greatly endeared to many members of the congregation who gratefully have remembered the inspiration of her teaching and the grace of her Christian spirit.

Dr. Lamson's ministry nobly supplemented that of Dr. Walker. Dr. Walker had developed the historic interest of the Church and made it conscious anew of its position in the history of the city and the state. Dr. Lamson met the changing conditions of the rapidly growing community during the years of his pastorate and by the genius which was his as a leader of worship, by the power which was his as a preacher of the Gospel and by the Christian sympathy that was ever characteristic of his great heart, he made the Church known and loved through a wide constituency beyond the bounds of the parish and enriched the life of the city by the contagion of his sympathy and the inspiration of his character.

*Rockwell Harmon Potter*

*(At the request of the Council of the Church, this sketch was written by Professor Henry A. Perkins, chairman of the Tercentenary Committee of the Church.)*

Rockwell Harmon Potter, the sixteenth Minister of the First Church, was born October 1, 1874, so that he was only in his twenty-sixth year when he was called to occupy this pulpit. His ancestry was partly of New England stock. The Potters came from Rhode Island, while his mother's family, the Harmons, were from Connecticut. But his father,



*Rockwell Harmon Potter*





Spencer S. Potter, was descended, on the maternal side, from the Dutch family of Romeyn, probably of Huguenot derivation. Dr. Potter's great-grandfather Romeyn was a minister of the Reformed Church, as his father had been before him. The latter graduated from Princeton in 1750, and the son was for a time a member of the first class in Union College, though he received his degree from Williams. Catherine S. Harmon, Dr. Potter's mother, was graduated from the Emma Willard School in Troy, in 1867. This implies a mental training somewhat rare among the women of her time, and must have been a decided factor in the unusually early development of her son.

The education of our future Minister began in the country school of his native town, Glenville, New York, and was supplemented by the local Pastor who coached him in his Latin. This was followed by a three years course in Union Classical Institute (later the High School) in Schenectady. He entered Union College at the age of sixteen and was graduated there in 1895. A year at the Yale Divinity School followed, but the year after, attracted by the teaching of Professor Arthur C. McGiffert, he transferred to Union Theological Seminary. During the summer vacations of 1896 and 1897 the young theological student supplied the pulpit in a little church in Nebraska. This experience made a deep impression on him and he felt destined to throw in his lot with the Middle West, so the next winter was spent in the Chicago Theological Seminary where many future ministers of western parishes were being trained. Here he came under the influence of one former and one future Hartford clergyman, the Reverend Graham Taylor, and Dr. Mackenzie, later head of the Hartford Theological Seminary. In fact, it was partly their reputation which influenced him in his decision to finish his theological studies in Chicago. After receiving the degree of

B.D. there in 1898, he was married to Jean Gilchrist of Marshalltown, Iowa, a union which brought them five children.

Dr. Potter's life-long consecration to the Christian ministry was a natural and steady growth from the time of his joining the village church as a boy, and through the various stages of his education, which was steadily leading him toward that goal. But it was not until he was in college that his mind was fully made up as to his calling. In 1897, he was invited to preach on two successive Sundays during the Christmas vacation in the Reformed Dutch Church of Flushing, Long Island. This led to a call to its pastorate, and he was ordained there shortly after his marriage and graduation from Chicago, in the spring of 1898.

The call to the First Church of Hartford came only two years later, when the death of Dr. Lamson had created a vacancy. After the congregation had had the opportunity of hearing Dr. Potter in their own pulpit, he was given a cordial welcome to Hartford.

The installation took place on October 3, 1900. Dr. George A. Gordon of Old South Church in Boston preached the sermon. The "charge to the pastor" was given by Professor M. W. Jacobus. The Reverend Joseph H. Twichell gave him the "right hand of fellowship," and Dr. Edwin Pond Parker delivered the "charge to the people." From that day until his retirement, the end of September, 1928, Dr. Potter served Center Church with all his might. Although his activities reached far beyond its immediate scope, covering as they did the whole field of Congregational activities in the United States and its work in foreign lands, his devotion to his duties as pastor and preacher could hardly have been more complete if he had never served a larger community. This was only possible because of a whole-hearted consecration to his calling, indomitable en-



ergy and great capacity for work. Few men have the power of such continued and intense concentration, and even Dr. Potter's robust physique has twice suffered from the strain of this life of entire sacrifice to a single cause.

So intensely energetic an existence was bound to bear fruit, and it did so in a variety of ways. In 1900 the Church had only 638 members, in 1928 there were 1169. During this period the endowment greatly increased and numerous organizations of young people and old came into being as a result of the Minister's zeal.

But there were also difficulties to be met. In spite of increased membership, church attendance did not keep pace with growth. With the opening of the century certain profound changes began to take place both in Hartford and all over the country. These were felt with peculiar force in a "down-town" church, and it was no easy task to hold the Church to its historic position of influence in the spiritual life of the city. Among these changes were the movement of many substantial families away from the neighborhood, the passing of many stalwart supporters of the Church, and more than all the beginning of an age when a sense of obligation to maintain established practices was waning. Then came the automobile, the Sunday movies, Sunday golf, and the "week-end" visit, a title which the Minister deplored as significant of the changed attitude toward the *first* day of the week. The Sunday morning service of God was no longer regarded as a serious duty, and only an occasional "popular preacher" was able to stem the tide and fill his pews. Dr. Potter has never been "popular" in this sense. His preaching has always been on a plane of pure spirituality. He has preached the gospel of Christ, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, and the brotherhood of man. The writer remembers many really great sermons both inspiring and of that searching quality which

made his hearers' "hearts burn within them." If such preaching did not crowd the Church, it helped it grow strong in other ways, which was no small achievement at a time of waning church-going throughout the land.

It is possible that the Congregational communion lays too much stress on preaching. The worship of God, which is really the chief business of the Church, is sometimes neglected for pulpit oratory. But sermons, too, can represent worship, and Dr. Potter's were of this kind and showed him to be a true "son of the prophets" and a worthy successor of the many great preachers who preceded him.

The Vesper Services were initiated by Dr. Walker in 1891 under a vote of the prudential committee "to counteract the tendency to neglect church-going," and were continued throughout Dr. Potter's ministry. They were usually well attended, at least before the advent of Sunday concerts and other secular entertainments. On Sundays near Christmas, and on Palm and Easter Sundays the attendance at Vespers sometimes reached twelve hundred or over in a Meeting House designed to seat only nine hundred and sixty. This is ample evidence of the appeal the Minister made to all sorts and conditions of men; and another is the printing, mainly through voluntary contribution, of no less than sixty-six of his sermons.

Young men and women, students at school and college, heard Dr. Potter gladly. Yale, Harvard, Williams, Cornell, Wellesley, Vassar all welcomed him from time to time in their college chapels, and he frequently preached at Smith, Amherst and Mt. Holyoke, often at two on the same Sunday. As a lecturer he was also much in demand. The Hartford Seminary students have heard his lectures on homiletics three times a week since 1919. He also gave a course on "Problems of the American Church" at Chicago Theological Seminary. In 1912 he held a lectureship



at Teachers College of Columbia University, and the lectures he delivered there were printed by the University as a book entitled, "The Common Faith of Common Men."

Such a wide hearing naturally led to many calls from other churches, but he steadfastly refused them, although at least two churches were especially urgent in their efforts to secure him as Pastor. These were the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas in New York City and the First Congregational Church in Los Angeles. Dr. Potter seriously considered the latter call, but decided against it, partly because of the loyal manner in which his own Church both collectively and individually urged him to stay. The strain of making this decision was great, and he suffered a serious nervous breakdown as a result, but was back in the pulpit the same year, after a long vacation. A call in 1907 to be dean of the Yale Divinity School should also be mentioned, as well as one to the Harvard Church in Brookline.

Before leaving the subject of preaching, a word should be said in tribute to Dr. Potter's occasional sermons to the children of the congregation. These preceded the regular sermon and were admirably adapted to his young hearers. The writer remembers especially one inspired by the warning signs of "soft shoulders" beside newly made highways. The application to children who shirk their share of home duties and responsibilities was well brought out, and with a kindly spirit of perfect sympathy with his hearers.

But preaching is only part of a minister's office, perhaps the smallest part in the complicated organization of a modern church. The pastoral duties are vital. Dr. Potter labored as faithfully here as in fulfilling his duty as a preacher, and he had a devoted following among his flock. Many came to him in trouble, sure evidence of his gift of sympathy, and he visited unremittingly those especially in



need of his ministrations, making from four hundred to six hundred and fifty pastoral calls a year. Many a lonely, sick or sad soul has been cheered and comforted by his presence, and now as Honorary Minister many of those same persons still count on seeing him and having his advice and comfort.

A pastor is also responsible for the conduct of the many activities of a Church outside the Meeting House. Here again Dr. Potter was effective in furthering the interests of the Sunday School, the various clubs and "guilds," and the missionary societies, so that they prospered and grew. Another valuable service to the Church's life was the giving of lectures during the Autumn and Lenten Schools, which had come to replace the earlier Thursday evening meeting. These lectures, on missions and other topics, were always interesting and useful, while an occasional reading of a great poem was an unusual feature. Dr. Potter's one hobby is poetry. He loves beautiful verse, and reads it remarkably well, so that his interpretations of such poems as Noyes' "Watchers of the Sky," selections from Dante, and Masefield's "Good Friday" have been a real privilege to listen to.

The financial problems of such an organization as the "First Ecclesiastical Society" were of themselves of serious import, and we had a Minister equal to his portion of the task. His exertions, inspired by a far-seeing appreciation of the Church's needs, were to a large extent the cause of a rapid growth of its endowment. In 1900 the endowment consisted mainly in the "Fund of 1802" represented by the building north of the Meeting House, and by five or six special funds. By 1928 this had grown to the impressive number of over fifty special funds for the immediate needs of the Church and Sunday School, not counting the funds devoted to Warburton Chapel. So that, in spite of the loss

of many generous supporters, the Church has not only carried on its historic work, but has actually made steady gains in usefulness to the community. At the same time, also inspired by the Minister, we have been able to maintain our honorable position as the third church of our denomination in America from the point of view of donations to missions and other philanthropic enterprises.

Outside of the ministerial office Dr. Potter's activities were, and still are, numerous and important, and honorary degrees conferred upon him by Union, Rutgers and Williams Colleges in 1907, 1915 and 1927 were well deserved. In Hartford he was a trustee of the Hartford Theological Seminary from 1902 to 1928 when he became its dean. He has been president of the Connecticut Bible Society since 1904, president of the Connecticut Institute for the Blind since 1907. He was president of the Consumers' League from 1913 to 1930, and also held that office in the University Club. He served for nine years on the Juvenile Commission, to which he was appointed by Mayor Hooker, and has long been a director of the Charity Organization Society.

Beyond the borders of the state, Dr. Potter's activities include a ten years term as trustee of Union College, and he has served since 1912 on the board of Mt. Holyoke College. But undoubtedly the most important of his many posts of responsibility have been his three positions as president of the Congregational Home Missionary Society (1915-1921), as Moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches (1923-1925), and as president of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, since October 1925. No one before him has ever held all three of these important offices, and his being so honored is ample testimony to his undoubted executive ability, a rather rare commodity among clergymen.



The duties of directing the American Board called Dr. Potter to India during the winter of 1925-26, to inspect and report on the missions supported there by the Board. He left in October and was gone until the following spring, the pulpit being chiefly supplied in his absence by the Reverend Nehemiah Boynton. On this tour he was accompanied by a party of commissioners consisting of the Reverend William E. Strong, secretary of the Board, and Mrs. Strong, Dr. Charles E. Jefferson of New York, and Miss Amy Welcher of Hartford. The party spent three months in India where they saw many interesting persons and places but were mainly occupied with the extremely laborious task of visiting innumerable schools, colleges, hospitals and churches in many of which Dr. Potter preached to native congregations. Joined by Mrs. Potter they returned in the spring by way of Japan where they made further visits to mission stations under the Board's direction. Such a trip was of the greatest value to the Board, and on his return Dr. Potter was enabled to advance the cause of missions by addresses on India in many churches and before various Congregational Clubs.

In closing, I cannot do better than quote from the "minute" adopted by the Church in accepting Dr. Potter's resignation on June 11, 1928.

"By putting emphasis upon the personality of Jesus of Nazareth as embodying the highest concept and example of human life as it is associated with divine relations in spiritual experience, and by avoiding the pitfalls of purely theological discussion, he has made himself a sane and healthful leader of religious thought of both the old and the young in his Church and congregation, and an inspiration to growth in Christian living for us all."



*John Milton Phillips*

John Milton Phillips, D.D., was called to the pastorate of the Church January 3, 1930. He accepted the call and entered upon his duties in March, and was installed by the Church by the assistance and approval of a Council called for the purpose on April 30, 1930.

Dr. Phillips was born in Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1889, the son of William S. Phillips, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His college course was taken at Illinois College where he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1912. His professional training was received at the School of Theology at Boston University. During his college course he served as a preacher on a circuit of Methodist Churches in the vicinity of the college. During his seminary course he was Assistant Minister in the Central Congregational Church, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. Upon completion of his preparation for the ministry he served from 1915-1920 as Pastor of the Park Avenue Congregational Church at Arlington Heights in Massachusetts. In succession he served as Pastor of the Central Congregational Church of Lynn; of the Franklin Street Congregational Church of Manchester, New Hampshire, and of the First Congregational Church of Akron, Ohio. During his pastorate in Arlington Heights he was married in 1917 to Eleanore Sinclair.

His vigorous preaching and effective leadership in the work of these Congregational churches drew to him the attention of this Church and the call to him to enter upon its pastorate was unanimous and enthusiastic. He has undertaken his work with the cordial appreciation and cooperation of the people of the Church, who look forward gladly

to the continuance of his ministry among them as they shall receive his interpretation of the Christian gospel, his challenge to the Christian service and his ministry to the Christian experience.

Dr. Phillips' ministry has been recognized by the degree of Doctor of Divinity granted him in 1929 by his *alma mater*, Illinois College and in 1930 by Northland College. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Boston Seaman's Friends Society and of the Commission on International Relations of the General Council of Congregational and Christian Churches for which he wrote in 1931, "The Peace Primer," a notable contribution to the pamphlet literature available for use in the education of youth in the movement for world peace.

The seventeenth Minister of the Church leads its life into its fourth century with the affection and confidence of the members of the Church and its congregation and with the cordial good will of the community. In generous as well as genial fellowship he has responded to the welcome of his colleagues in the ministry and offered his service freely for their common tasks. His predecessor in the pastorate rejoices with his people in the contagious enthusiasm, the courageous resourcefulness and the brotherly spirit of John Milton Phillips, a twentieth century Puritan, a prophetic Great Heart, who discerns the signs of the times and leads steadily on toward the achievement of the timeless values of the Kingdom of our Lord.



*John Milton Phillips*





## CHAPTER IV

### *The Meeting Houses*

AROUND the Meeting Houses of this Church the affections of the people have gathered through all of the history of its three hundred years. The affection in which we now hold the fourth Meeting House built in Hartford in which our worship has been held for one hundred and twenty-five years is a symbol of the affection which has been successively given to these shrines of the spirit wherein our fathers have worshipped.

The first house was that built in Newtown immediately upon the arrival of "Mr. Hooker's Company" who proceeded thither by order of the Court from Mt. Wollaston. It was a small building thirty-six feet in length by twenty-three feet in width and stood near what is now the intersection of Dunster and Mt. Auburn Streets, and a stone in the building which until recently occupied the spot bore the inscription, "Site of the First Meeting House in Cambridge, erected in 1632." Near it was the house built for Thomas Hooker which stood for many years in Harvard College Yard. It served the community during the few years of their sojourn in Newtown. The sessions of the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were sometimes held within its walls and there were gathered

also the messengers of the churches in the famous synods of 1637 and 1649, after the removal of the original colony to Hartford and the development of the community which succeeded it in Newtown. In 1649 this primitive house gave way to a more adequate or at least more substantially built edifice for the Newtown or Cambridge congregation.

"Mr. Hooker's Company," upon arriving in the Connecticut valley, undertook at once to provide a common house which might serve as a Meeting House for the Church and also as a place of assembly for the people of the community on all civic or other occasions. This house stood very near to the southeast corner of the lot east of the Old State House. It was probably about the size of the one which they had left behind them in Newtown. It was built of logs and covered with a roof of rude boards. To us it would seem a most uninviting place of worship or even of assembly, but to the first colonists of the town it was doubtless a haven of refuge from their own dwellings which must have been even more rude and plain, and in it they found both fellowship and inspiration which enabled them to bear with the hardships of those first years in the new settlement.

In 1638-40 the second house in Hartford was built upon practically the same location as the first. This was a much more adequate structure built of frame covered with substantial boards and a roof of the same material. The old house of meeting which had served the first years of the settlement was given to the Minister, Mr. Hooker, and was used as his barn. Glass windows gave more adequate light to the new house and the seats were more serviceable for the uses of the congregation. A simple cupola or embryo steeple surmounted its roof and in this was hung the bell



which is thought to have been the second bell used in this country for church purposes, the first being that at Jamestown, Virginia. The congregation had brought it with them from Newtown, prizing it too much to leave it behind.

While the congregation used this Meeting House, at any rate in its earlier years, the men who were its members served as guards each Sabbath and Lecture Day in order that the foes of the community, the unfriendly Indians of the region, might not take advantage of these opportunities to make a surprise attack, even though the Indians of the immediate neighborhood were disposed to be friendly. In 1644 a gallery was placed in the Meeting House on one side and in 1660 and in 1664 other galleries were placed, so that the house through most of its history had galleries on three sides. Some adornments were provided for the pulpit in the form of "a plush cushin, a green cloth and silk for the fringes and tasseles of said cushin." The Meeting House had no arrangements providing heat or artificial light. Even the use of foot stoves developed gradually and met with disfavor, presumably because they made worship too comfortable.

It served also as the Court House, the Town Hall and the meeting place of the General Court of the Colony. So through ninety-nine years this Meeting House served the Church and its community. It was the second house in Hartford and the third house of the Church.

As early as the beginning of the year 1726 a movement is recorded in the records of the Ecclesiastical Society looking toward a new Meeting House to take the place of the house of 1640, which by this time had served for eighty-six years. The project was complicated first by the suggestion that the Second Church, which had separated from

the First in 1670, be united with the First Church and that the new building serve for the reunited congregation. There was no tangible result from this proposal, for by this time it was probably clear that the town was destined to be large enough to require the use of two meeting houses and strong enough to maintain two churches. The project was further complicated by difficulties as to the location of the new Meeting House. Mrs. Abigail Woodbridge, the widow of Timothy Woodbridge, the honored former Minister of the Church, desired that it should be located on the east side of Main Street and offered a lot for that purpose. This lot was about where the Morgan Memorial now stands, but a considerable number of the congregation were dissatisfied with that location and indicated that they would not subscribe to the cost of the new building if it were to be placed there. The matter was laid before the General Court of the Colony and there was much discussion, some of which was rather heated, concerning this matter. At last it was decided that the Meeting House should be built on the southeast corner of the Burying Ground on the west side of Main Street. Mrs. Woodbridge was offended by this action and for a time withdrew from the fellowship of the congregation and worshipped with the Second Church. Later she was reconciled to the decision as to the location of the Meeting House and returned to the fellowship of the First Church. She had borne witness to her loyalty to the Church by the gift of a silver cup for use in the Communion Service. This cup, bearing an inscription to the effect that it was her gift, has had a curious history, having been sold by the Church in 1804 and having been purchased and returned at the time of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary by an interested member of the congregation. It is preserved now as one of the prized possessions of the Church and



has its place upon the communion table at each returning observance of the Lord's Supper.

The Meeting House of 1740 was a much more adequate building than those which had preceded it. It served the congregation well for sixty-seven years. It had a steeple with a spire. It had the chaste beauty and strength of the pre-Revolutionary Meeting Houses like those in Wethersfield and Farmington which providentially remain to us. On July 31, 1737, Daniel Wadsworth, the Minister, recorded in his diary, "This was y<sup>e</sup> Last time I preached in y<sup>e</sup> old meeting house," and on August 2, "This day y<sup>e</sup> people began to pull down y<sup>e</sup> old meeting house, took down y<sup>e</sup> pulpit, seats and bell, and carried y<sup>e</sup> pulpit into the State House." He also records "upon y<sup>e</sup> weather Cock that was taken off of our old meeting House was this date, 1638. Whence I suppose our old meeting House stood ninety-nine years." The new building was completed in the late fall of 1739, and on December 30, was dedicated with a sermon from the text, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord." Mr. Wadsworth enters it in his diary "Lords Day. Haggai 2:9. I preached on this text all day. This was y<sup>e</sup> first Sabbath wee met in y<sup>e</sup> New Meeting House." It stood upon the ground occupied by our present Meeting House with its side to the Main Street, fifty-six feet in length and forty-six feet in width. The pews were square and from time to time there was the usual difficulty with reference to the ordering of the congregation for their use. The pulpit was graced with a canopy and sounding board, a cushion and a new hour glass, which must have been of a somewhat elaborate design as the Society was willing to spend five pounds, ten shillings and one penny for it in those frugal days. In this Meeting House the Church and its congregation lived



through the stirring days of the Great Awakening and the period of the Revolution. Here Daniel Wadsworth, who was Pastor during its building, completed his ministry of fifteen years. Here Edward Dorr fulfilled his entire ministry of nearly twenty-five years, and here served Nathan Strong through the period of the Revolution and the establishment of our national life.

In 1804 the Society voted to appoint a committee to consider the building of a new Meeting House. The decision was favorable toward such a project. In 1805 the third house of worship in Hartford was removed and work was begun upon the building of our present Meeting House. The town had given permission to the Church to use somewhat more of the Burying Ground for its location, and tradition has it that its western end, with its pulpit, is located over the grave of the first Minister. The cost of the Meeting House is shown by the records to have been \$32,014. A detailed record of all expenses incurred was kept by the treasurer of the committee, Peter Gallaudet, and this faded and yellowed record book is at the present time one of the treasured possessions of the Church. The building was completed without debt and dedicated in 1807. It is said to have been modeled upon the pattern of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields in London. Mr. Daniel Wadsworth, a member of the congregation, grandson of the Reverend Daniel Wadsworth, was the leading spirit in its construction and is credited with having been the amateur architect of its design. Mr. Wadsworth was doubtless familiar with the Church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields as he had traveled in England and very likely had a vivid impression of that Church which he used in his plans for the new building in Hartford.

This Meeting House has served the First Church for one hundred and twenty-five years. It is built of brick and is seventy-nine feet in width and one hundred and fourteen feet in length. Some of the timbers of the original Meeting House are said to have been included in this fourth Meeting House. It was given a slate roof, a porch, and a steeple one hundred and eight-five feet in height over its eastern end. This steeple encloses the belfry in which was placed the old bell of the Church. This bell had been recast in England in 1727 and included in its metal materials of the original bell brought with the Church from Newtown in 1636. It had been placed in the belfry of the third Meeting House in 1739. In 1841 the bell was injured or developed flaws in its metal, and after an experiment with another bell which was unsatisfactory, it was sent to West Troy, New York, to the celebrated Meneely Foundry, where it was recast, with the inclusion of added material, and returned in 1850 to its place in the belfry. Its weight is reported to be three thousand four hundred and ninety pounds, and it bears cast in its metal the inscription, "Holiness unto the Lord." Until recent years it was connected with the clock in the steeple and sounded out the hours in the heart of the city. At present, this connection has been outworn, and the bell is used only for the purpose of sending out the call for Sunday morning worship. While the bell was absent from Hartford to be recast in England in 1727, a flag was used on the State House adjacent to the second Meeting House yard for the purpose of calling the people to worship. The Second Church, through its Society, contributed to the expense of the recasting of the bell as it was considered a useful instrument for the purposes of both churches. We are told that when the third Meeting House was removed



and the new house was built, the bell was temporarily hung in the tower of the building then used by Christ Church. So this bell, which contains in its material the original bell which came with the colonists from England, symbolizes more completely than any other material thing, both the continuity of the history of the Church and the happy relations which the Church has enjoyed in Christian fellowship with other churches of the town and city.

The Meeting House has passed through many changes in the course of the years of its use. Provision for the comfort of the congregation was made by the Society soon after the house was built as is indicated by the following vote in December, 1815: "Voted that the Committee of the Society procure two suitable stoves for warming the Meeting House, and cause the same to be set up in such a manner as shall best comport with the ornament and safety of the house and the accommodation of the Assembly." In January, 1818, it was voted "that the Committee heretofore appointed to take into consideration the subject of lighting the Meeting House, be authorized to procure such number of lamps of the kind last mentioned in their report of this date as shall be necessary for lighting the Meeting House and to suspend the same in such manner as best to effect the object." In some respects the interior has been changed. Originally the building was without any break in its western wall for the location of the pulpit, and the pulpit stood upon columns at the west end of the middle aisle. It must have been a very lofty perch for the preacher for in 1816 at the close of Dr. Strong's ministry it was somewhat lowered and again in 1835. At this time the galleries were also lowered and the square pews which had been placed in them gave way to pews such as those now used, arranged in descending series.



## *The Meeting Houses*

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When it was built, the Meeting House had square pews beneath the galleries along the north and south walls. The central portion of the floor was occupied by pews of about the same size and shape as our present pews. In the earlier usage such pews were called slips to distinguish them from the square pews. In 1852 further changes were made in the interior. The square pews under the galleries were replaced by the pews we now use. The ceiling, which had been flat, was changed into the present curved form which adds so much to the dignity of the interior. The pulpit recess was built upon land granted by the town from the Burying Ground, and the present pulpit was erected in it. At this time lighting fixtures of a somewhat elaborate design were introduced to permit the use of gas for illumination during the evening services.

The changes that were made in the Meeting House in 1852 added much to its dignity and serviceability. It is greatly to be regretted, however, that the pulpit with its sounding board was not preserved. It would today be a priceless possession if it could have been kept, perhaps beside the present pulpit, and used only on occasions, or better still, adapted to the location of the "pulpit recess."

Structurally the Meeting House, as it stands at the three hundredth anniversary of the Church and one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the building, is as the repairs of 1852 left it. Almost the only exception to this is the appearance of doors on either side of the pulpit recess, which were placed to provide emergency exits at the west end. From time to time the interior has been refinished to keep it in good condition. The most notable of these undertakings were those in 1883, 1900, and 1917. Again in 1932, an entire renovation is being carried on in preparation for the three hundredth anniversary.

The exterior remains as it was when the Meeting House was built in 1807. The only noticeable change during the long period has been that it was painted, not at the time it was built, but within twenty or thirty years from that date. It had become the practice to paint brick buildings, and this plan was followed by the Society in its care of the Meeting House. In 1917 the paint was entirely removed from the brick and only the wooden surfaces of the exterior were painted. The brick walls were covered with a protecting material which answers the purpose for which the paint was intended, but which leaves the brick in its original appearance.

At the time of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary the window back of the pulpit, which had been placed there in 1852, when the pulpit recess was built and which was of plain glass and required shades to protect the eyes of the congregation from excessive light, was replaced with a window of rather elaborate design, bearing the names of the Ministers of the Church for the two hundred and fifty years, and given in their memory. It was found from experience that this window also permitted so much light to pass through it that the congregation could not with reasonable ease give their attention to the preacher. It became necessary therefore, to cover it with a plain hanging. In the years immediately following upon the placing of this memorial window to the Ministers a series of windows representing scriptural and symbolic figures and including a memorial to the first Minister was placed in the lower tier windows around the Meeting House. The list of these memorials will be found in the appendix. A few memorial tablets have been placed upon the walls, and the Communion Table, the Baptismal Font, the deacons' chairs, and the plates for



receiving the offerings of the congregation have been given as memorials to the Church.

The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Church was observed on October 10 and 11, 1883. Though the Church was actually gathered in Newtown in 1632, it was on October 11, 1633, that the first Minister and the first Teacher were recognized by the congregation and therefore the observance was fixed for the anniversary of that date. On this historic occasion the gratitude of the congregation was expressed for the Meeting Houses used by the Church and especially for the Fourth Meeting House, then seventy-five years old. In addition to the notable historical address delivered by the Minister, Dr. Walker, out of which grew his history of the Church, a paper was presented by Mr. Rowland Swift giving an account of the Meeting Houses and their appointments. This paper is preserved with the historical address of Dr. Walker in the volume which includes the proceedings of the anniversary.

In 1907 occurred the one hundredth anniversary of the dedication of the fourth Meeting House of the Church. It was noted that its centennial came in the year of the two hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the actual founding of the Church in Newtown in 1632. Accordingly the two anniversaries were observed together, the exact date being the anniversary of the dedication of the Meeting House on December 3. In token of gratitude for the preservation of the Meeting House through one hundred years, the memorial organ, originally given in 1883, was rebuilt by the gift of the congregation.

The observance was marked by an address upon the Meeting House by Mr. Francis Parsons, and other addresses by Professor Williston Walker, and the Rev. Arte-



mus J. Haynes, D.D. of United Church, New Haven, and by congratulatory addresses by Governor Rollin S. Woodruff for the State, Mayor William F. Henney for the city, the Rev. Edwin Pond Parker, D.D., for the churches of the city and the state, and by the Rt. Rev. Chauncey B. Brewster, Bishop of Connecticut of the Protestant Episcopal Church, for the interdenominational fellowship of the churches.

We are now coming up to the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of our Meeting House, as we celebrate the tercentenary of the founding of the Church. It has been preserved to us through a longer period than any of the preceding houses of worship, and it is the earnest prayer of all those who love it that it may stand for many years to come.

## CHAPTER V

### *The Use of the Meeting Houses*

IN the early New England communities, the Meeting House was a term generally used for the building designed for public worship but devoted necessarily to the use of any public gathering too large to be accommodated in the homes of the families. Whether the meetings were religious or political, it was the Meeting House that was used for the purpose. Even observances which were social in character had no other place in which to be held and on the infrequent occasions when such assemblies were gathered it was in the Meeting House that they convened.

In the early years of the Hartford community the same custom was followed. The Meeting House, on the square assigned to it when the settlement was laid out, served all the purposes included in its name. It was the arsenal of the town and such arms and ammunitions as were held for the general purposes of the settlers were stored there. It was the seat of the civil government and the citizens met there to determine their common policies. When the representatives of the neighboring towns came to form the General Court they met with the representatives of Hartford in the Meeting House. In 1639 the meeting which adopted the Fundamental Orders was held there.

As time passed and some travel developed between the towns and between the Colony and other settlements in Connecticut and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, taverns for the accommodation of travelers were established and meetings of informal conference on public affairs were held in these taverns.

The Meeting House, however, continued to be used for the more general civic meetings. A Court House was built in 1719 to serve for the judicial purposes of the growing town, but still the Meeting House served for the use of the General Court when it convened in Hartford. In this way both the first and second Meeting Houses of the Church were used in the old location on Meeting House Square, and the third House likewise when it was built on the Burying Ground in 1739. The most notable event in the third Meeting House was the meeting and action of the convention which on the part of Connecticut ratified the Constitution in 1788. The Connecticut Courant for January 7 of that year, records the following notice of this convention which met for six days and adopted the Constitution on January 9 by a large majority:

“January 3, 1788. The Hon. Convention of this State met this day at the State House in the City of Hartford, and appointed His Excellency, Matthew Griswold, Esq., late governor of the State, President, and Jedidiah Strong, Esq., Secretary. After examining the certificates of the members, they adjourned to the North Meeting House which had been previously fitted up with stoves for the purpose of accommodating the convention.”

But the primary purpose of the Meeting House from the beginning was its use as a place of worship. It may be interesting to observe something as to the character of this use. It appears that there were ordinarily two services on Sunday. This was the usage for the greater part of the





*The second Meeting House*



*The third Meeting House*



history of the Church. The diary of Daniel Wadsworth which records his service with some minuteness indicates two services every Sunday. Nearly a hundred years after his time we find in 1865 a vote upon the minutes of the Society as follows:

“Voted that in the opinion of this society afternoon service in the Center Church should commence no earlier than three o'clock in winter and four o'clock in the summer.”

After the conclusion of the ministry of Dr. Hawes the second service was omitted for a time. In 1891 it was established again in the form of a Vesper Service which met with wide acceptance in the community both because of its unusual character and because of the ability with which the music was rendered and the effectiveness of the pulpit ministry of Dr. Charles M. Lamson, in the years of his pastorate from 1894-1899. The Vesper Service continued until 1928. In it was used, except in the first experimental years, a semi-liturgical order of service developed by Dr. Lamson in collaboration with Mr. Nathan H. Allen, director of music.

In marked contrast to the semi-liturgical character of the Vesper Service was the form of service used in the earlier Meeting Houses and during the first two centuries of the life of the Church. These services began with a free prayer on the part of the Minister which occupied a period of fifteen minutes. After the prayer the Minister read and expounded at some length passages of Scripture of his choice. Following upon the Scripture reading came an act of praise on the part of the congregation. For this the Bay Psalm Book was generally used. This was published in 1640 and was notable as the first book printed in America. The words only of the metrical version of the Psalms were printed and for their use in worship were set to a few tunes which were preserved among the people by tradition.



Old Hundredth is probably the best known of these early tunes remaining to us. It is probable that the singing of the Psalms under these conditions had no other impressiveness than that of a tremendous sincerity on the part of the participants. The sermon was preeminent and to the minds of the people the significant element in this form of Puritan worship. In it the minister set forth his understanding of the Scriptures and the body of the Christian teaching and applied the truth to the spiritual experience and the life of the people. It probably continued not less than an hour in its delivery and was given to the congregation directly by the minister without the use of a manuscript either in the form of a complete written transcript or even an outline or notes. Tradition reports sermons of greater length than one hour though these were probably occasions when the minister felt called upon to extend his usual effort. An hour-glass upon the pulpit served to inform both the preacher and his congregation of the passage of time during the delivery of the sermon. The sermon was followed sometimes by the singing of another psalm or hymn and the congregation was dismissed with a benediction by the minister. This primitive order of worship has continued with comparatively slight modifications until our own time. We scarcely realize how recent has been the introduction of varied prayers, of music by the choir, of responsive reading of the psalter or other scripture and the receiving of an offering. In the *Hartford Evening Post* for April 15, 1890, there appears an interesting editorial on the new form of service at "the Old Center." This service included responsive readings for the first time, and was looked upon as "a hint of Popery" by many of the more conservative of the congregation. Marked changes are now taking place in the order of worship including unison prayers and prayers arranged for responsive use by the minister and the people.

Dr. Timothy Woodbridge, Minister from 1685-1732, had marked influence during his long pastorate upon the development of the worship in the Church and especially upon the practice of the Church as to its singing. In 1727, near the close of his ministry, he preached a "Singing Lecture" in which he defended singing by note and argued for the return to the use of printed music which had been abandoned by most of the Puritan churches from the time of their establishment in New England. The Church, however, was committed to its practice using only the guidance of tradition in its tunes and it was not until after his death that the Church took action, deciding to try the new method of singing by notes for three months. In December 1733 we find the Society taking action as follows:

"Voted that Singing by Rule be admitted and practiced in the Congregation of this society in their publick Worshipping of God; and this Society by their Vote manifest their desire that Mr. Joseph Gilbert Jun<sup>r</sup> would take upon him the Care of Setting the psalm in the Congregation according to the above Vote."

In the pastorate of Edward Dorr in January 1756 the records show an action by the Society's Committee with reference to the use of Dr. Watt's Psalms.

"Voted that Society's Committee inform Mr. Dorr that the Society are desirous that Dr. Watt's Psalms may be sung in the Congregation at the time of Divine Worship at least half the time."

During these years the service of leadership in song in the congregation was a voluntary service for which some suitable person was appointed by the congregation. In 1783 the following vote is recorded:

"Voted that the sum of three farthings on the pound be laid on the Polls and Rateable Estate of the inhabitants



of this Society for the purpose of hiring a suitable person for teaching Psalmody in the Society."

In 1789 the Society made an appropriation "for the purpose of encouraging and assisting psalmody." Such action was taken each year by the Society, the sum gradually increasing from five pounds to twelve hundred dollars in 1875. In the years succeeding, changes have been made in the conduct of the music of the Church. For a time a male choir was used, for the most part a quartet, occasionally varied by the addition of one or two singers and recently by the use of a chorus.

In 1817 a small selection of hymns for use in the Church was published by a Committee of the Society to be used in connection with the hymn book of Dr. Dwight. In 1845 it was determined to use an edition of psalms and hymns that had the approval of the General Association of Connecticut. And in that year it was voted "to take measures for the instruction of the young members of the society in singing."

Instruments of music must have been used occasionally in the earlier Meeting Houses and in the first years of the use of the fourth Meeting House. The first use of an organ was in 1822 when a number of members of the Society presented such an instrument. In the following year an appropriation of two hundred dollars was made for the employment of an organist. In 1835 the Society purchased its second organ—a notable instrument which was made in Boston and brought to Hartford around Cape Cod in the schooner "Lydia." "The American Magazine of Useful Knowledge" for 1835 contains a description of this organ with a picture of it, and the editor, Nathaniel Hawthorne, observes that it had "a greater volume of tone and brilliancy than we have ever witnessed in any organ of its size."



At the time of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Church in 1883 the organ of 1835 was replaced by an instrument given by Mrs. Leonard Church in memory of her husband. This served until 1907 when it was entirely rebuilt and in this form continues to serve the congregation. The case of the organ of 1835 has been preserved and is one of the ornaments of the interior of the Meeting House.

Numerous civic occasions have made use of the Meeting Houses as the place of assembly. Of these the greater number were the old time observances of "Election Day." When the General Court met in Hartford it was the custom for its members to march in a procession from the Court House, and later from the State House, to the Meeting House of the First Church. Assembled in the Meeting House the representatives listened to a sermon from the minister of the Church or from some other minister of the Colony or State invited to serve. On such occasions the preacher chose themes dealing with the recognition of providential guidance in the history of the people or having to do with the moral values and responsibilities of government. Such occasions were notable in the history of the community and of the Church and such assemblies must have been graced with no little civic dignity and accompanied by justifiable civic pride. They were continued until about one hundred years ago.

Many patriotic societies have used the Meeting House for anniversary occasions, some for special meetings which took the nature of conventions. Quite regularly patriotic services for such organizations have been held in the Meeting House, sometimes by request of the organization, sometimes by invitation of the Church delivered through its Minister. A notable civic commemoration service was held in the third Meeting House at the beginning of the nineteenth century and a similar one in the present Meeting

House at the beginning of the twentieth century. This latter service convened at 11:30 p. m. December 31, 1900 and after prayers and responses and scripture reading awaited in silence the ushering in of the century at midnight by the strokes of the historic bell of the Church.

At the time of the dedication of the Bulkeley Bridge in October 1908 a civic service of commemoration and thanksgiving was held attended by representatives of the city government and their guests.

From the time of the installation of the first organ the Meeting House was used occasionally for many years as a place for the rendition of music and many concerts of the character that was known as "sacred music" found an appreciative public there. In 1822 the Society's committee authorized the Jubal Society to give a concert of music in the Meeting House, "with open doors and liberty of a contribution but without any sale of tickets." This policy of permitting musical events for which no admission was charged has been the general policy of the Church with regard to the use of its Meeting House for such occasions. In 1915 Mr. Nathan H. Allen, organist of the Church from 1883 to 1906 presented to the library of the Church some old and rare programs of "sacred concerts" held in the Meeting House in 1835 and 1836. Mr. Allen wrote to John D. Parker, clerk of the Church, "Probably few members of the Church today know anything of the generous part the Center Church took in the early evolution of musical culture and taste in this city. So far as sacred music went—in concert form—the Center Church was the chief concert hall in the town, and was generously given for every large effort without money and without price; and the pastor, Dr. Hawes, stood willing and ready to open all these functions with fervid prayer, as was the custom in those days."



Of especial interest in the use of the Meeting House for religious services there should be mentioned the preaching of Whitefield at the time of the Great Awakening, of Lyman Beecher, Asa Nettleton and Charles Finney during the first half of the nineteenth century and of Dwight L. Moody in later years.

An unusual use of the Meeting House was made in 1813 when Dr. Strong acted for the Church in granting its use to a Catholic priest, who was traveling through the country and was detained in Hartford because of the law prohibiting travel on Sunday. There was no Catholic Church in Hartford at that time and Dr. Strong invited the traveler to conduct a service for his companions and any Catholic people of the city in the Meeting House.

On Christmas in 1862 a union meeting of Congregational, Methodist and Baptist churches in observance of the day was held in the Meeting House with Dr. Hawes presiding. It was probably the first time the Church held a service in the definite observance of Christmas day. It is to be regretted that the precedent has not been followed. Union services upon Thanksgiving day and upon Good Friday have long been held in union with other downtown churches.

The Church has always given cordial welcome to missionaries in its Meeting House since the day in 1819 when Hiram Bingham, missionary of the American Board under appointment to the Sandwich Islands, preached in its pulpit. Many other missionaries have spoken at the meetings of the Church and of various missionary organizations. The annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was held in the Meeting House in 1901 and again in 1918. The meeting of the Congregational Home Missionary Society was held there in 1898.



It is interesting to remember, on the three hundredth anniversary of the Church in 1932, while the nation is observing the bicentennial of the birth of Washington, that upon the occasion of the first president's death in 1799 a service was held in the Meeting House to commemorate his life and services. The *Courant* of December 30, thus describes this event:

"In consequence of the afflicting intelligence of the death of General Washington, divine services were performed at the North Meeting House in this town on Friday last. The town never exhibited a more solemn and interesting appearance. Notice having been given to the inhabitants of this and the neighboring towns, the concourse of people was greater than almost ever known on any former occasion. The stores and shops were shut through the day, the bells were muffled and tolled at intervals from nine in the morning until the service commenced. The Meeting House was greatly crowded, and still a large proportion of the people could not get in at the doors. The services were solemn, appropriate and impressive. A very eloquent and pathetic sermon was delivered by the Reverend Nathan Strong to a most attentive, devout and mourning audience from Ex. 11:3, "And the man Moses was very great."

This sermon was published by the Church. The following abstract summarizes its message and gives its spirit. It brings a contemporary testimony to Washington's greatness.

"That we may on this occasion honor the supreme Sovereign of the world and duly estimate the public loss sustained, let us contemplate the providence of God in raising up great and eminent men. Whenever God hath a great work to do in the world, he forms instruments fitted for the trust to be reposed in them, and at no other times,

so that we may consider their formation and introduction to the scenes of action, evidential of a Supreme Being.

“When a Moses and a Washington were brought on the stage of action, it was to effect changes in the state of mankind which could not have been done under the auspices of common characters. Much honor is due to them as instruments of Almighty goodness but let the glory of fashioning them be given to God. The highest honor which we can give to mortals, is to say that the Author of life made them greater and more virtuous than other men, inspired them with talents above their brother men, and fitted them with a rare understanding. Moses was formed to rescue the ancient Israel from bondage. Washington was formed to rescue the modern Israel of the Lord.

“It cannot be expected of me particularly to recite the events that made him beloved of his country and owned as their preserver. It must suffice for me to say that General Washington was the point of strength around whom the political fathers and the military defenders of this country have rallied, and where they reposed their earthly confidence. In a period of almost thirty years Washington has been the name which would raise a martial spirit by the waving of his sword, or soothe the multitude to peace, quietness and subordination, as his voice and pen advised. His opinions became the opinions of the public body. And every man was pleased with himself when he found he thought like Washington. Our Revolutionary War began suddenly, when the country was wholly disorganized. It was General Washington who ordained system, induced regularity, was found capable of reducing a half armed multitude to military bravery and obedience. It since appears that while doing this in camp, his pen was the organ of wisdom and of a persevering firmness to the councils of the several states. The fame, even of historians, will be eternized in



relating how he, with the band of his brother officers vindicated the foundations of American Empire.

“He expressed a reverence for God and resorted to the throne of grace when danger threatened. He had a luminous understanding; a mind above the rustle of passion. Nothing was too small to call his attention if it regarded the public good. At the same time, he was naturally formed to look on great objects and survey in one comprehensive view, an empire in all its civil and military interests. American freedom and independence was written on his heart. As his enlightened life drew to a close, he had a most deep sense that the people whom he had saved by his sword, could be preserved in future prosperity only by a firm adherence to the principles of their own government and the religion of their fathers.”

So through the years the Meeting Houses have served the people of the Church and of the town and the city. In the life of the present its use is somewhat more closely limited to its purpose as a house of prayer, but it stands ready to serve the higher life of the community in the furthering of all earnest effort for the welfare of the people, and for the establishment of that Kingdom of God to which it is dedicated by the prayers and hopes of all those who have crossed its threshold.



## CHAPTER VI

### *The Ecclesiastical Society*

THE earliest records extant in the possession of the Church are those of the Ecclesiastical Society, which appears at first to have been a meeting of the men of the Church and its congregation for the transaction of its business when the Church became conscious of itself as distinct from the town. These records begin in November of 1684 and contain the transactions of the Society which were needful for the handling of the so-called temporal affairs of the Church. They continue in unbroken succession, rather meager indeed, but clear and sufficient through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Society acted on all matters of business, and the corresponding Church records, which are by no means so complete, have to do with the spiritual affairs of the congregation, the ordering of the arrangements for the sacraments, for the admission of members and for their discipline. This parallel arrangement in this Church continued throughout its long history until 1903 and it does not appear that in the course of all that time any serious difficulty arose between the organization of the Church and that of the Society.

However, many churches were not so happy in their experience and had serious controversies arising out of di-

vergent action. Moreover, there was a feeling that no separate institution should own the property of a Church and that all members of the Church should have opportunity to act on matters concerning its temporal as well as its spiritual welfare. Accordingly the State made provision that a church might receive incorporation and so have the right to hold its own property. From time to time after this provision was made by the Legislature, different churches in the State availed themselves of the privilege.

The matter was not seriously considered in The First Church of Christ in Hartford until 1903. With the beginning of that year a committee from the Prudential Committee conferred with a committee of the Society and reached a unanimous decision to recommend both to the Society and to the Church that the Society transfer its property to the Church and that in due course the Society be dissolved, leaving the Church in possession of the property with responsibility for its administration. The way had been prepared for this action by the incorporation of the Church on February 12, 1895. This incorporation had not been made for the purpose of receiving the funds and property of the Society, but with a view to holding any bequests that might develop to the Church itself.

On March 19, 1903, at a special meeting of the Church held in the Meeting House, formal transfer was made of the properties of the Society to the Church. The occasion was signalized by an address by Professor Williston Walker upon the Ecclesiastical Society, its history and significance in the church life of New England.

In preparation for this transfer of properties a careful study of the rules of the Church had been made and they had been adapted to the new situation which would obtain when the Church should hold title to property and be



charged with its administration. The significant features of these rules, which were drawn by a competent committee, and which were made to conform carefully with the provisions of the Connecticut statutes concerning such matters, were the lodging of the title to the Church property in the hands of the Church as a corporation, the placing of responsibility for the administration of such property in the hands of the Prudential Committee and the creation of a Business Committee of two members to act as agents of the Prudential Committee in carrying out these responsibilities. Subsequently the number on the Business Committee was increased from two to three.

The First Ecclesiastical Society continued its corporate existence for a few years after the transfer of property was made. The final dissolution of the Society took place January 28, 1910, when it was deemed wise to take this step and to certify to the office of the Secretary of the State of Connecticut that such dissolution had taken place and that the First Church of Christ in Hartford had been definitely designated as a corporation to receive and hold not only all the properties that had been transferred but also any properties that might in the future develop as properties of the First Ecclesiastical Society.

It is interesting to note that at the time when the transfer of property was made there were registered ninety-nine members of the Society. Four or five of these were non-resident. With one or two exceptions all the remaining members were also members of the Church. It is probable that this fact rendered the Ecclesiastical Society more ready to take the step involved. In the years that have followed, the directness and simplicity of the single organization handling the Church and its property has greatly appealed to all those who have had to do with these matters.



The example of the Church has been widely quoted and its method of procedure has been frequently followed by other churches of Connecticut seeking to take the same step. While there are a considerable number of these which retain the double system of organization, it is being generally conceded that the system of single control is preferable and increasingly churches are coming to recognize this.

Throughout its history from the beginning of its records in 1684 to their conclusion in 1903, The Ecclesiastical Society was much concerned with the seating of the congregation in the Meeting House and with the support of the Church. In the course of three hundred years these two have borne varying relations to each other which it may be interesting to sketch briefly.

The earliest records give little hint as to how the congregation was arranged when gathered for public worship. Presumably early in the story before the original Meeting House was replaced by the house of worship built in 1640, the congregation gathered and disposed themselves with no other arrangement than a division between the men and the women. When the Meeting House of 1640 had been built and the congregation had adjusted itself to its use, the difficulties of keeping the boys in order began to appear and also the problem of arranging for regular places for members at all assemblies of public worship. Not long after the building of this Meeting House, the original division between men and women was abandoned and husbands and wives took their places together at the hour of worship on each Lord's Day. The older boys exercised their gregarious instincts by grouping themselves in the rear pews or in the galleries and two problems were thus developed.

The first of these was the question of precedence in the seating of the adults. Attempts were made to solve this problem by the appointment from time to time of committees which undertook to allocate pews to the different families. In January, 1685, we find in the records, "It was voted by the Society that they desired Capt. John Allen to seat the people in our Meeting House according to his Judgment and Discretion, Bothe in ye lower Rooms and in ye Gallery." A similar vote occurs often throughout the records. Such seating committees had their difficulties as they were supposed to consider the age and general social standing of all members of the congregation and to arrange their positions in the Meeting House with this in mind. All through the earlier years of the Church life and indeed well through the eighteenth century this problem was recurrent.

So far as the records show, it appears that the adults and the girls of the congregation were subject to these rules made by the seating committees but that the boys, either by consent or in rebellion, were accustomed to group themselves in the galleries or the back pews and oftentimes to disturb the seemly decorum of the public assemblies. Accordingly officers were appointed to take note of the situation and to keep the boys in order. We find, for example, that in 1709—to select one of many—it was voted "that Henry Bracy shall take Care to keep the boys in order that sit up in the gallery in the Time of Divine Worship (and not to suffer them to Sit only in the South Side gallery), also James Ensign to take the Same Care of the boys that Sit below." No one seems to have proposed that the boys could be directed to take their places with their parents in the assigned pews and thus transfer the problem to the family for solution.



The seating arrangements of the congregation seem to have had no direct relation to the amounts raised by taxes or otherwise contributed for the support of the Church. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the support was cared for by the "rates" or taxes levied for the Society by the authorization of the General Court or Assembly. The Society was responsible for the collection of these "rates." The work of collection was difficult, apparently, even when enforced by civil authority, for the records show that often those appointed to this duty declined to serve, making it necessary to appoint others in their places. The town was divided into two districts, "on the north Side of the little Rivulet" and "on the south," for the task of collection.

For a time at the beginning of the eighteenth century it appears that the Minister was paid in provisions rather than in money, for we find a vote in 1710 that Mr. Timothy Woodbridge should be paid "in provision pay," and the next year, more definitely, "one hundred and four pounds, in Indian corn at three shillings, wheat at six shillings, Rice at three shillings and six per Bushell."

When the present Meeting House was built in 1807 a practice was adopted which presumably had become common in other communities, of securing funds for the project by the sale of rights to the pews. These rights became deeds of possession when the house was built and the pews in the present Meeting House were actually owned by the people who subscribed the funds for its building. Now this was an effective way of securing funds for the initial project but manifestly it provided no revenue for the current work of the Church. Accordingly the Ecclesiastical Society made various efforts to provide a scheme which would meet the needs of the organization each year. During the first years



of the use of the present Meeting House funds were raised by a tax of one or two cents on the dollar "on the rateable estates of the inhabitants belonging to said Society," as had been the method from the beginning. We find, however, in a review of the whole situation in the Society records that "about the year 1822 many members of this Society had become dissatisfied with the private ownership of seats in the meeting house and with the practice of raising money by taxation to defray current expenses." A special committee was therefore appointed to procure leases from the owners of pews to the Society, that the Society might annually rent the pews. Seventy-five per cent of the rental was to go to the pew owner and twenty-five per cent was to be used for parish expenses. This plan met with various vicissitudes and finally, after some years of debate, during which various proposals were made and found inadequate, the Society in 1828 voted to borrow money and buy outright all the pews whose owners would sell. In the course of time all the deeds were transferred to the Society and it became the actual owner of the property rights in the Meeting House.

The problem of support, however, was still to be met and under this new arrangement the Society undertook to assess the pews in proportion to their value. This came to be practically a system of rentals and the pews were annually offered to the congregation at the assessed valuation. Sometimes there was rivalry for the possession of the more desirable pews in the center of the Meeting House and in time the annual rental became an auction and members of the congregation made bids for the use of a pew which they particularly desired. The amount the pew would bring at this semi-public auction, over and above the sum fixed by the Society as the proper rental, was known as a pre-

mium. When the congregation was large such premiums added materially to the income for the year.

The spectacle of a public or semi-public auction for the disposal of the right to use pews in the Meeting House for the worship of God and for instruction in the Christian religion became more and more distasteful to many in the congregation. In 1897 the practice of such annual sale was discontinued and arrangements for the rental of the pews were made by the committee of the Society with each pew holder individually. The rentals were determined on the basis of the needs of the Church for the current year, modified by the possibility that all the pews might not be in demand. These rates carried over with them certain inequalities that had been developed through the years of the public sale. In the course of time these inequalities were adjusted by a careful study of the situation and a wide variety of rentals was arranged so that the system became really a method of subscribing for the support of the Church and it was possible for any member of the congregation to find a sitting which would correspond to his desire and ability to contribute.

Meanwhile the membership had been called upon to provide funds for support in addition to the amounts available from pew rentals, particularly through the "every member canvass" which was initiated for the year 1916.

During the year 1927 a careful study of the whole situation resulted in a recommendation that the system of pew rentals be abolished, that the entire support of the Church be raised by voluntary contributions from all members of the congregation and that the pews in the Meeting House be opened freely to everyone on equal terms.

Thus after nearly three hundred years the Church returned to the arrangement that apparently obtained at the

very beginning of its history when seats in the Meeting House were free and unassigned. The pew system had developed certain values. It emphasized responsibility on the part of the members to the organization and it emphasized also the family as a unit in the congregation. The first of these values is being reasonably secured by the present day methods of preparation for the annual subscriptions through the "every member canvass." The second is being conserved for our modern time by the development of the Church School with its provision for adequate religious opportunity for children and youth, which it is to be hoped will lead to the right evaluation of the family in the life of the Church.



## CHAPTER VII

### *The Ancient Burying Ground and Center Church House*

THE ancient cemetery or burying ground of Hartford was set apart by the action of the town as early as 1640 for the use of the primitive Colony. The size of it at the beginning was somewhat greater than that which we now recognize by the title "The Ancient Burying Ground." It extended on the east to the main highway which came to be known as Main Street, and probably somewhat farther to the north than the present limits.

Those of the colonists who died during the first four years following the migration of 1636 were buried near the first Meeting House on the square where now stand the Old State House and the Federal Building. These graves were few in number and the space available in that location was limited, so that the act of the town in setting apart the burial place on the west side of Main Street was quite natural as the community sought to prepare itself for the future.

This burying ground was the only cemetery until the setting apart of the old North Cemetery in 1807. Dr. Walker estimated that during the one hundred and seventy years probably as many as six thousand burials took place here. After the opening of the old North Cemetery upon



*The Ancient Burying Ground*





Windsor Avenue—now Main Street—and the later opening of the old South Cemetery on Maple Avenue, the Ancient Burying Ground fell into disuse. There are no indications of burials there later than about 1820. With the passage of the years, the thought of the community was naturally diverted from the old burying ground save as a place of memory and it would appear that for two or three generations following its disuse comparatively little thought was given to it. It remained in the possession of the city which had succeeded to the town government and was cared for inadequately by successive committees appointed in charge of public property. Encroachments were made upon the land with more or less definite permission of the city government. Building lots on Main Street were sold, presumably by the city in the first instance, to private individuals on condition that for a period of years no excavations should be made other than those necessary for the foundations of the buildings to be erected. In the course of time, these private owners of property somewhat extended their holdings into the original burying ground property and the proscription against excavating was evidently forgotten or allowed to lapse.

It may be that the Church itself was an innocent cause of this attitude toward the burying ground. In 1726 when the second Meeting House of the Church in Hartford was thought to be no longer adequate, it was evidently in the mind of the congregation to provide its successor on some other location than Meeting House Square. As will have been noted in the progress of the story of the Church, there had been a sharp division among its members as to whether they should locate their new Meeting House on the east or the west side of the main street. The party in favor of the use of the west side prevailed upon the town to offer

to the Church the privilege of building its Meeting House on the southeast corner of the burying ground. So that it was by permission of the town that the first building was erected upon land that had been set aside for purposes of a burial place. Doubtless the community upheld the town committee in its decision to grant this permission for this particular purpose. But it may be that the town, having been generous to the Church in granting such permission, thought that it might well follow the precedent in part and grant the use of land along Main Street to private individuals for some compensation. In the course of time the property next north of the Meeting House, whereon a sizeable structure had been built, which was either originally designed for a school or later had been converted to that purpose, was bought by the Church and remains its property now known as the old Chapel Building. This process of encroachment upon the burying ground quite naturally continued in the nineteenth century when it was no longer used for its original purpose.

So matters continued until Dr. Walker, the historian of the Church, with his fine sense of what is valuable in the records and memorials of the past, called the attention of the community to its duty to this old God's acre, first by a sermon preached from the pulpit of the Church, and later by an address delivered before the Ruth Wyllys Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on January 24, 1895.

In 1890 an effort had been made to secure municipal action in acquiring a property on the north side of the narrow street known as Gold Street in order to give some restoration to the old burying ground, but it had failed of passage at a town meeting and most citizens had concluded



that the effort to secure civic action was doomed to defeat.

The appeal of Dr. Walker, however, brought forth fruit. In 1896 the Ruth Wyllys Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution voted to undertake the task of improving the burying ground and of saving the stones in it which were falling into decay. Mrs. Emily Seymour Goodwin Holcombe was at the time the Regent of the Chapter. She appointed a committee for the purpose and presently found herself summoned by a sense of duty to undertake the leadership of the enterprise.

Her leadership was at once diligent, persistent and high-spirited. The Board of Common Council, convinced of the desirability of the proposals, took action establishing new lines for Gold Street. Subscriptions were secured from a large number of citizens and descendants of founders and early residents of the community. The Church itself made a generous contribution and on June 17, 1899 the completed work was recognized with an appropriate public observance. Dr. Walker was present to witness this consummation of a purpose so dear to his heart and Dr. Lamson, then Pastor of the Church, offered prayer. Addresses were delivered by Professor Williston Walker, Mr. Arthur L. Shipman and the Honorable Henry C. Robinson. The observance was a fitting crown to a piece of civic work for which both the city and the Church will ever be profoundly grateful.

The Ancient Burying Ground does not now belong and never has belonged to the Church but manifestly the interest of the Church is very great in this God's acre. It was placed under the charge of the Park Board by the city government and has since had excellent care. It lies now be-



tween the Meeting House and Center Church House, and will ever be dear to all those who worship in the Meeting House or come to serve at the Church House.

If it had not been for this improvement of the Burying Ground and the widening of Gold Street, the present location of the Center Church House would have been quite impossible. The Church is therefore doubly indebted to those who were responsible for carrying out this plan at a time when the need for an addition to its plant had become imperative.

In the later years of the pastorate of Dr. Lamson increased attention was given by the Church to the conduct of the Sunday School. Devoted and effective volunteer service had been given to the school during nearly one hundred years. Wise guidance had been supplied by laymen serving as superintendents and by earnest and loyal men and women serving as teachers. With the growth of the community and the dispersal of the homes of many of the people to greater distances from the center of the city it became increasingly difficult to secure volunteer service and it was found necessary to secure trained and experienced paid workers for the direction of the school in order to make it serve adequately under these changed conditions. This extension of the work of the Sunday School brought vividly to the attention of the committees of the Church and of the Sunday School staff the need of a more adequate plant in which to carry on the educational and social activities of the congregation. The rooms used for this purpose on the second floor of the old Chapel Building were found to be too limited and too lacking in facilities to make possible the development that was felt necessary and desirable.

On November 13, 1904 the members of the congregation were surprised to find an item on the calendar which



*Center Church House*





read, "The sum of \$4.00 has been deposited with the Treasurer of the Church to start a fund for a new Parish House." The manifest contrast between the meager amount thus offered and the amount needed for any such ambitious project caused some smiles to pass through the pews as the congregation assembled. In the following weeks the item reappeared upon the calendar with some slight increase in the total amount registered.

Meantime the Minister had occasionally mentioned the matter to members of the Prudential Committee of the Church and others who might reasonably be expected to have special interest in any proposals looking to the future welfare of the Church and its work.

In the week before the Easter of 1905 Mr. Francis R. Cooley informed the Prudential Committee that he and his mother, Mrs. Clarissa Smith Cooley, his sisters, Mrs. Clara Cooley Jacobus and Mrs. Sarah Cooley Hall and his brother, Mr. Charles Parsons Cooley, were disposed to offer to the Church a gift of one hundred thousand dollars, in memory of the late Francis B. Cooley for the purpose of securing a site and erecting thereon a suitable parish house.

The Business Committee which received this information in behalf of the Prudential Committee at once set about to secure a site, or at least some options for a site, knowing that this step should in all business prudence be taken before any public announcement be made of the gift. Property at the corner of Gold and Lewis Streets was deemed the most desirable for this purpose. The property on the south side of Gold Street was considered as possibly available. The original proposal had suggested the wisdom of retaining the building next north of the Meeting House as a permanent investment of the original fund of 1802 which had been used in its purchase.

The property desired was found available for the purpose and options for the lots were secured with the exception of that for the lot on the immediate corner of Gold and Lewis Streets. It was hoped that an option on this lot also could be secured the day before Easter in order that announcement of the gift might be made at that service. At noon, however, unexpected difficulties appeared. For the moment this seemed to block the opportunity of the Church to receive the gift proposed.

In the evening of that day, however, the Business Committee was able to negotiate for a further piece of property on Lewis Street somewhat to the north of the property for which options had already been secured. This made possible the announcement of the gift, inasmuch as enough ground had been secured on which to build the needed parish house even if the immediate corner of Gold and Lewis Streets should not prove available. Accordingly the gift was announced on Easter Sunday, 1905 and the congregation was privileged to celebrate the great Christian festival with an enthusiastic response to this challenge to their future service and with sincere gratitude to the family of one who had long served the Church as a devoted and wide counsellor and a loyal supporter of many of the practical aspects of its work.

On the following day the difficulties which had arisen with regard to the proposed purchase of the property on the corner of Gold and Lewis Streets were overcome and the Church was in a position to plan for the building of a parish house on the site which was clearly recognized as the most desirable for that purpose. It appeared, however, that there were certain leases upon the property thus acquired and while the desire was marked among the workers of the Church to go forward immediately with the new



project, it was considered on the whole wise not to sacrifice any considerable portion of the gift in buying up these leases, but to wait for the four years necessary for their expiration, and in the meantime to let the fund accumulate by the addition of its income to its principal while the plans for the building were undertaken with abundant time for their careful preparation in view of a thorough study of the probable future needs of the Church and its work.

Accordingly the house was not built until 1909. The corner stone was laid on November 9, 1908. The building was dedicated November 17, 1909 and has been for a score of years the happy home of the activities of the Church.

For many years the rooms in the so-called old Chapel Building had been used by different organizations of the city undertaking religious or social welfare work. During a long period, a weekly meeting of the ministers of the city was held in the old parlors. Organizations such as the Connecticut Bible Society, the Woman's Aid Society, the Shelter for Women, and The Charity Organization Society turned naturally to the Church for the use of these facilities for their meetings, both because of the convenient location of the Church in the center of the city and because of the number of Center Church people engaged in these activities.

When Center Church House was built, these same organizations and many others sought the use of its chapel and various rooms with similar purpose. In view of the relation of the Church to the city historically and because of the obligation which it felt toward its cultural life, it was decided to adopt the most generous possible attitude toward such applications for the use of the Church House. The Prudential Committee adopted the principle that the use of the various rooms in Center Church House be



granted to religious, educational or philanthropic organizations without charge, except for the necessary janitor service involved, at such times as should not conflict with the regular uses of the house by the Church itself and by its organizations. The policy thus adopted has been carried out in the conduct of the parish house and a great number and variety of organizations of the city have made use of the rooms and facilities available to further the purposes of the educational, religious or welfare work to which they are devoted.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Educational Aims and Achievements*

IN the Puritan churches knowledge of the Christian truth and life was from the beginning closely bound up with the cultivation of its expression in worship and its practice in conduct. One of the motives of the Puritan revolt in England was the desire for a more intelligent and more intelligible presentation of the Gospel from the pulpit. Thoughtful Christians in whose hands had been placed the Bible in their own language, in the version of 1611, were stirred to read its pages and sought to understand its meanings. They desired the help of an educated and effective pulpit in this undertaking. They protested against the leadership in worship of men who could only read the service or at most repeat the sermons of other preachers.

When they were established on this side of the water, these churches desired not only a minister who could preach the gospel from the pulpit in his sermons on successive Sundays, opening its meanings to their questing minds as a preacher, but also a minister who might serve as a teacher among them, sharing occasionally the pulpit with the pastor and leading the people in the consideration of the meanings of the Gospel in additional hours devoted to instruction. It would be interesting to know just what was the division

of ministerial labor between Thomas Hooker, the first Minister of the Church and Samuel Stone who was associated with him as the Teacher. Unfortunately there is no record remaining which gives a clear picture of the way in which these tasks were shared. The leadership of Hooker was so marked that it is probable he gave both the sermons that were preached on Sundays and the occasional lectures that were delivered on other days before the citizens of the Colony gathered in their Meeting House.

The usage of the Church soon developed a regular meeting during the week, the purpose of which was instruction in the meaning of the Gospel and probably the communication of information as to the affairs of the times, in so far as knowledge of them could come in those days by the slow methods of transit that were provided from the old home in England, from the communities of the Bay Colony and from other developing communities of Connecticut and New Haven. This occasion came to be known as "the Great and Thursday Lecture," and served the purpose of a kind of weekly editorial delivered by the minister or by the teacher upon such current events as had come to their knowledge.

Throughout the early history of the Church this institution continued, more or less intermittently, and for successive generations it served as the chief means of religious education among the people aside from the instruction provided by the pulpit in the worship of the Lord's Day. There are no records to indicate any special organization of the Church for the purpose of cultivating this privilege and its opportunities. One can imagine that attention in the Thursday lecture was often diverted from religious themes to the affairs of the Colony. Instruction as to the relationship of the towns one to another, as to their common responsibilities and as to their organization through the



General Court, must have claimed the attention of many such a gathering in the earlier years when the organization of the Colony was being developed. Later the theological and ecclesiastical debate which issued in the division of the Church and the forming of the Second Church must have provided matter for many vigorous presentations on the part of Mr. Whiting who became the leader of the new movement. In the eighteenth century during the Great Awakening the instruction of the Church in the Thursday lecture must have been devoted very largely to the consideration of the theological ideas that lay back of that general movement among the churches. Doubtless as the years moved on towards the period of the Revolution, political issues came to the front in the lectures delivered by Mr. Dorr during his pastorate. It is likely that in Nathan Strong's time the lectures were interrupted by the necessities of the war and its effect upon the community. Whether Dr. Strong made use of them to set forth his political ideas in the years following the Revolution, when there must have been much discussion of political matters, we do not know.

As the opportunities for the discussion of public matters in other than church meetings increased and as the newspaper began its dissemination of news, the Thursday lecture undoubtedly was returned to its original function and was devoted more exclusively to instruction upon religious matters, both theological and biblical. It may be that the people felt they were receiving sufficient instruction on such matters from the pulpit in the worship of the Church, for it does not appear that the Thursday lecture played any considerable part in the church life during the latter part of Dr. Strong's ministry.

At the beginning of the ministry of Dr. Hawes in 1818 the Sunday School movement, which had been initiated in

England as an effort to reach children and youth who were quite outside of the influence of the churches, made its way to New England and Connecticut. Dr. Hawes gave generous interest to this project and within the first year of his pastorate shared in the organization of "The Hartford Sunday School Society." Dr. Flint, the honored Minister of the Second Church, became the president of this Society and Dr. Hawes became one of the directors. At the beginning the Sunday Schools were under the charge of this Society rather than of particular churches. There were four schools organized, each using quarters provided by one of the four churches of the town. School Number One was held at the North Conference Room on Temple Street which had been secured by the First Church during the later years of Dr. Strong's ministry. A second school was held at the Episcopal Church, the third at the Baptist Meeting House and the fourth at the chapel of the Second or South Church. The constitution stated that "the object of the Society shall be to communicate religious instruction to those who shall attend its schools; and to teach the rudiments of learning so far as may be necessary for the attainment of religious knowledge." There were two sessions on Sunday, one at nine o'clock and the other at two in the afternoon, during the summer months only.

The original arrangement of having the schools administered by a separate society and assigned for their accommodation and doubtless for their workers to the different churches, did not long prove satisfactory and after two years the responsibility for the schools was taken over by the churches to which they had been assigned. It would appear that the Sunday School Society continued its existence, preserving a friendly oversight of the schools and fulfilling its purpose as a source of inspiration for their workers. Later on the Society developed additional schools



under its direct control, one of which became Warburton Chapel and another the Morgan Street Sunday School, later on the Village Street School. Other schools from time to time provided Sunday School instruction for children and youth in different parts of the city, one in particular on Albany Avenue and another on New Britain Avenue. Just when the original Sunday School Society ceased its activities is not now definitely known.

Meantime the original Sunday Schools became the educational agencies of the churches with which they had been associated. The school that had been "Number One" became known as the Sunday School of the First Church. It was not formally under direct control of either the church organization or its ecclesiastical society, but it was dependent upon the Society for provision of the Conference Room in which it met and upon the Church for its officers and teachers. Its pupils were drawn for the most part from the homes of the congregation. The report of the school for 1837 shows that the afternoon session had been given up and one meeting of an hour and a half in the morning had taken its place. Later, in the report for 1867 we find that "the most noticeable and probably important event in the history of our school in the year we chronicle, was the change in the time of holding it from nine and a half A. M. to three P. M." It was felt that, had more space been available, many adult classes could have been formed and the "Sunday School would not merely take the time of the old afternoon service but actually take its place and be a substitute for it." Its purpose was to provide knowledge of the Bible in order that such knowledge might be available in the minds of youth when later on they should be confronted with the challenge to enter into the Christian experience. The teachers and officers of the school exercised great moral influence over their pupils and the declared



purpose of the Sunday School was character building through the provision of biblical instruction. One of the early reports states it in these terms, "The design and end of Sabbath School instruction is to make the children wise unto salvation."

In 1832 the needs of the Sunday School had so developed that the Church asked the Society to make more adequate provision for its accommodation. To meet this need the Society sold the Conference Room on Temple Street and purchased the land next north of the Meeting House on Main Street. The building which stood upon this land was adapted for the purposes of the Sunday School and other meetings of the Church and served as its home until the building of Center Church House in 1909.

The work of the Sunday School through the more than one hundred years of its history has been notable in the contribution of intelligence, fellowship and character it has made to the membership of the Church. The school has kept in touch with the leaders in the work of religious education both in the community and throughout the country and has shown itself ready to make use of the newer methods as developed by the resources of modern pedagogy. During the pastorate of Dr. Lamson the rules of the Church were so amended as to provide that the election of the Superintendent of the Sunday School should be made by the Church. The school has had the devoted service of as fine a body of Christian men and women as ever served a Church in its educational work. A list of its officers and teachers through the years would include a large proportion of those who have made the Church what it has been and would show as well the names of not a few of those who have been prominent in the business, the cultural and even the political life of the city. The school has had the active sympathy and earnest interest of the congregation and it is probable that

very few have come into the membership of the Church on confession of their Christian faith who have not been prepared for that step and in most instances led to it, by the instruction given in the school and the guiding influence of its teachers upon their lives. By personal influence and by instruction the work of education in religion was thus carried on. Groups of boys and girls were gathered, societies of young men and of young women were organized, flourished, gave their witness, offered their contribution and were succeeded by other groups gathered with the same purpose.

Meantime the Thursday meetings of the Church, long since transferred from the afternoon to the evening of that day have continued to serve the educational purpose with which they were initiated by the fathers. The old Conference Room on Temple Street during the later years of Dr. Strong's ministry was the scene of many Thursday evening meetings which contributed to the moral and religious development of the more devoted members of the Church and its congregation. In like manner the old Chapel Building on Main Street was a place where on Thursday evenings the meanings of the Gospel and the bearing of its truths upon life and character were earnestly set forth by the instructions of the ministers.

At certain periods, meetings for conference and prayer and for the witness of Christian experience were also held during the week by different groups within the church membership. Such meetings, held usually on Tuesday evenings, did much to promote the growth of the Christian life among the young people of the parish during the pastorate of Dr. Hawes, and led on to the formation of Young People's Societies in later years.

The Thursday evening meeting of the First Church has never been characteristically a prayer meeting, though



always marked by an earnest spirit of devotion. It has been a meeting of the Church for instruction and for guidance. Expositions of scripture, interpretations of Christian truth, presentations of common tasks, have there challenged the minds and hearts of the people.

In the years following the World War the scope of these Thursday meetings was somewhat enlarged to include more fully the purposes of Christian education. Three motives were acknowledged, the desire for fellowship, the desire for instruction and the desire to engage in Christian service. Fellowship has been achieved through a common meal where around the tables friend has met with friend. New friendships have been formed and the spirit of Christian comradeship has had ample contagion. Instruction has been given covering many ranges of the missionary work of the Church in the city, throughout the state, the nation and the world. Notable series of instructions upon different parts of the Bible have been presented and the wider aspects of Christian truth have been opened up by many gifted teachers who have generously given of their time and strength for this purpose. Plans have been made for many worthy Christian tasks in committee meetings and group gatherings that have been held in connection with these Thursday evening series which have come to be known as the Lenten School and the Fall Series. For the older youth and for the men and women of the Church these evenings have become a kind of adult education movement within the congregation.

In similar fashion the organizations of the women, of the men and of the young people have provided opportunity for the education of the congregation in religion, its meanings and its tasks. Programs have been arranged, not for purposes of entertainment or recreation, but with the purpose of communicating new knowledge and under-



standing of the meaning of the Christian way and the nature of the Christian task. The most recent development of this extension of the educational work of the Church has been the current events series for men and for young women, given by the Minister at a noon luncheon hour. The response to this service of the Church is such as to indicate further possibilities for its ministry in presenting a Christian interpretation of life and of the affairs of the world.

## CHAPTER IX

### *The Women's Organizations*

DURING the greater part of the history of the Church the impulse to Christian service among the women of its membership and congregation has found expression in the personal ministries of those elect and devoted women who have been most sensitive to human need and most responsive to the compulsions of the Gospel laid upon them by their Christian devotion. The greater part of the Christian service of a congregation must always be of this personal, unorganized sort, which can have its registry and its memorial only in the realm of the spirit.

In more recent years this impulse to Christian service has found expression in organized form. As early as 1859 an organization of women in the interest of home missions had been formed and was rendering its service under the popular name of "Sewing Society." The work of this Society had been in part devoted to the preparation of clothing and supplies for the families of ministers serving in home missionary churches in different parts of the country and in the preparation of garments for use in various relief organizations within the community. In 1886 this Sewing Society became formally related as an auxiliary to the Home Missionary Union of Connecticut, which was organized

about that time to correlate and develop the activities of similar societies in many Connecticut churches.

Meantime the interest of the women of the Church in foreign missions was developed through their participation, in rather limited numbers, in the activities of the Hartford Branch of the Woman's Board of Missions. The meetings of this organization were held regularly in the parlors of the First Church, and were under the gracious and inspiring leadership of Mrs. Charles A. Jewell, a member of the Church and long time the president of the Hartford Branch.

In 1898 these women formed the Women's Foreign Missionary Society as an auxiliary to the Hartford Branch of the Woman's Board of Missions. In the following year a society of younger women known as the "Foreign Missionary Club" was organized to carry on more intensive study of the foreign mission field and enterprise, also in relation to the Hartford Branch. These two organizations of the women in the interest of foreign missions, which were united in 1915, continued their study and activity through the years that led up to the formation of "Center Church Women" in 1919. Its department of foreign missions gathered up and continued the interest and work which had been served by these earlier organizations.

In 1883 a group of the younger women of the Church under the leadership of Mrs. George Leon Walker were gathered at her home in the parsonage of the Church on Prospect Street and organized as a "Parsonage Circle" to develop their interest in the home missionary enterprise and enlist their service for its prosecution. In 1891 this Parsonage Circle formed itself as the Junior Auxiliary of the First Church to the Women's Home Missionary Union of Connecticut. Again in 1901 this Society chose the name



"The Young Women's Home Missionary Club." In 1912 it took the name of Mrs. Walker who had been the inspiration of its beginnings and became the "Amelia Walker Auxiliary" of the Home Missionary Union of Connecticut. Meantime the work of the women in the original Sewing Society, which had become the Home Missionary Society of the Church, continued with markedly increasing scope and interest, developing a regular program of study of home missionary projects and an increasingly large volume of gifts both of materials and funds for this work.

Groups of boys and girls were gathered in circles from time to time to promote the interest of the children and youth in the outreach of Christian purpose in both the home and foreign mission fields. As early as 1877 a group of girls from the congregation and Sunday School was organized as a "Girls' Mission Circle" to undertake appropriate study of the foreign missionary field and to engage in the carrying out of simple tasks of missionary service such as in later times came to be called projects. This Circle extended its interest to include groups of boys as well as girls and took the name "The Boys' and Girls' Mission Circle." Its work was naturally supplementary to that of the Sunday School and furnished an appropriate means of releasing the interest developed by the direct study of the Christian Gospel and way of life in the school's regular program of religious education. Under the influence of this Circle the horizon of the Christian interests of the future members of the Church was very considerably extended. The work of the Circle continued with a good degree of activity until 1911 when the Sunday School itself took over the work by the organization of nineteen of its classes in the senior and intermediate departments as study clubs for carrying on

the missionary interest and undertaking appropriate missionary projects.

In 1909 a Council of the Women of the Church was formed including representatives of various women's organizations for the purpose of correlating their activities and promoting their common efficiency. During the World War under the guidance of this Council war work in the preparation of surgical supplies and other materials for the relief and help of the men in camp and on the field was carried on at Center Church House in cooperation with many forms of community activity through which the humanitarian interests of the women of the city found expression and had share in bearing the burden of the great struggle. Many women of the Church were efficiently active in these community enterprises while others found their opportunity in the group that served at the Church House.

In 1919, as a result of the cooperative planning of the Council of the Women, which had proved its value through a period of ten years and of the cooperative service of the women during the years of the war there was projected and planned a united organization of the women of the Church under the name "Center Church Women." In some measure this organization followed the lines that had been developed by "Center Church Guild." The Guild was organized in 1914 to provide an opportunity for fellowship and service for women whose duties were such that they could not share in the activities of organizations which held their meetings during the afternoons. The Guild has rendered a valuable service through its interest in the field of missions both home and foreign and in that of community welfare, as well as in the development of mutual acquaint-



ance among its members and earnest Christian friendship within its group.

In its organization in 1919 Center Church Women developed its work by departments: a department of home missions and a department of foreign missions continuing work that had been done by the organizations that had been developed for these purposes; a department of community service and of church work for the inclusion in a recognized way of activities that had hitherto been undertaken by committees occasionally appointed by the Women's Home Missionary Society. From the time of its organization Center Church Women has abundantly justified the hopes of those who had share in the making of its plans. It has conserved and developed the interest of the women of the Church in all of its departments of activity. Its weekly meetings from October to May through each year have been devoted in turn to these departments. Effective programs have presented the needs of the community, the state, the nation and the world. By reports and discussions the interest of the women in the activity of the Church itself has been developed, especially in the matter of extending its hospitality, the cultivation of friendship among the people of its homes and in making both the Meeting House and the Church House attractive centers of Christian community life.



## CHAPTER X

### *The Church in the Denomination*

IN the years immediately following the Revolution there was, it may well be believed, a decline in the spiritual fervor and ecclesiastical activity of the churches throughout New England and indeed throughout the country. They had passed through two long-continued and highly emotional periods—the period of the Great Awakening and the period of the war for the establishment of the new nation. Under the influence of Jonathan Edwards and the men who were associated with him in the chief centers of population in New England, the years from 1750 to 1770 or thereabouts were characterized by the active expression of a deep and tense religious spirit. Revivals were expected with great earnestness, were welcomed with enthusiasm when they came and were participated in with an excitement of spirit which is difficult for us of a later day to appreciate or understand. The preaching of the period was intensely theological and dwelt upon such doctrines as the sovereignty of God, the Trinity, the atonement, original sin, irresistible grace and the last judgment. Under such preaching the churches, as we might expect, had periods of marked growth alternated with times of less activity and through all those years religion was the main concern of the people of all New England communities.

The coming of the Revolution, with the events that immediately preceded it, marked the second period of which we have spoken, namely from 1770 to about 1795, as a period of intense emotional activity on the part of the people, directed chiefly to political rather than to religious and ecclesiastical matters. We may well believe that in Hartford and its two ancient churches there was vigorous discussion and intense feeling, perhaps not altogether on one side of the question, in the years that led up to Lexington and Concord and the Declaration of Independence. We may be sure also that there was intense expression of feeling, and this virtually unanimous, in the years of the war, 1776-1783, and that there was again discussion and debate, and perhaps marked division of opinion, in the years that followed the close of the war and led through to the establishment of the Union under the Constitution of 1787.

This marked absorption in the speculative and emotional sides of the religious life and in the prolonged political and military struggle and development claimed the interests of the people and lowered the level of church life and its influence upon character and conduct. It is probable that the last years of the eighteenth century and first years of the nineteenth registered the ebb tide in religion so far as popular participation in it went and so far as the actual development of Christian communities as churches was concerned.

Now once again the time of man's extremity was the time of God's opportunity. It was during this very period that the minds of some of the most devoted Christian leaders of the state were stirred to take action which led to remarkably far-reaching results in the work of organized Christianity in the life of our country and indeed of the world. In 1797 the Hartford North Association, at a meeting held in Farmington, voted to form a missionary



society. Dr. Strong, Minister of this Church, was a member of this association and was present at this significant meeting. In the following year, the General Association of Ministers of the state voted to form a missionary society reflecting the evangelical and missionary interest which in the previous year had been expressed in the Hartford Association and doubtless in other associations throughout the state. The missionary society of the Hartford North Association at once voted to merge with the society for the state. They had already declared in their act of the year before, "We hold ourselves ready to coalesce with a more general society for missions whenever any shall be formed in this state."

The Missionary Society of Connecticut, born out of the longing of a few devoted souls in the last years of the eighteenth century, was the forerunner of great things in the extension of the Kingdom of God. The Society itself has continued to the present time acting for the Congregational Churches of the state and rendering an unparalleled service in the length of its ministry and in wise, devoted and constructive policies of efficient Christian work throughout all its long story. In the next decade this effort for home missions, which was to find fruitage in a great host of home missionary enterprises, was paralleled by the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. For certain moving spirits in the incorporation of the American Board were men of Connecticut, notably Gov. Treadwell, Timothy Dwight, Jedidiah Huntington, and the Rev. Calvin Chapin, and the first meeting of the Board in September 1810 was held at Farmington, where doubtless Dr. Nathan Strong had opportunity to ally himself with this new venture as he had already committed himself to the home missionary enterprise twelve years before. Moreover, of the men who were



led into the missionary service first, the famous group of the Williamstown "Haystack Meeting" and Andover Seminary, Samuel J. Mills was the leader and in many ways the inspiration. It was without doubt that dauntless spirit of Mills which promoted the beginning of the American Board, and Mills was a Connecticut man.

From these beginnings of new interest in Christian enterprise on the part of the churches of New England and especially of Connecticut, came the growth of other organizations such as the Connecticut Bible Society, the American form of the Sunday School movement and many other evangelical and humanitarian agencies which stirred the life of the churches during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Now in all these enterprises this Church had its eagerly interested share. Dr. Hawes succeeded to Dr. Strong in an active interest in the Missionary Society of Connecticut, and later in the American Home Missionary Society which was the original name of what we now know as the Congregational Home Missionary Society. He succeeded also to Dr. Strong's interest in the work of the American Board, and indeed developed that interest to a remarkable degree, so that in later life he was happy to give a daughter to the service of the American Board in the Near East. He himself made a trip to the missions in the Near East after he had served for twenty-five years as Minister to this church. Loyal supporters of the Board's work were found during all those years among the lay members of the Church.

This early interest in Christian missionary service under its modern forms was but the continuance of the Church's attitude from the beginning of keen interest in the life of the world and of eager outreach toward other churches in seeking to develop the Kingdom of God. More than most

churches, has this Church given itself to these larger reaches of fellowship.

In later years at the time of the great Andover controversy within the American Board, Dr. George Leon Walker, at an historic meeting in Springfield, made the significant speech which composed the heated differences of the moment and which led, if not immediately yet surely, to a unity of spirit which transcended those differences and lost them in a new zeal for Christian service. Later, upon the retirement of Dr. Richard Salter Storrs from the presidency of the Board, Dr. Charles M. Lamson was called upon to take this responsible office. Still later, in 1925, again the Minister of this Church was called upon to serve as President of the American Board and at the completion of twenty-five years of service as Minister visited some of the missions of the Board, as his predecessor, Dr. Hawes, had done so many years before.

The connection of the Church with the home missionary enterprise has been not less marked and at least one of the ministers of the Church has served as President of the Congregational Home Missionary Society.

Among the laity of the Church somewhat less conspicuous but equally valuable service to these great causes has been given by a host of men and women notable for ability and devotion and for efficiency in organized Christian service. The gifts of the Church for these and other denominational benevolences have been notably large when compared with the giving of other similarly situated churches. Such gifts have not been large, probably, when compared with the ideal volume of contributions from a church of the potential giving strength of this congregation, but significant indeed when compared with contributions for similar purposes from other churches of equal strength and size.



The Church has always been well represented upon the board of the missionary society of the city of Hartford and in the Hartford Association of Churches. In the persons of at least a few of its interested members it has followed the development of denominational organization. It has been interested in the work of the commissions of the National Council and of the committees of the State Conference and has always sought to make a fair and reasonable response to requests for service of that sort. During the period 1923-25 the Minister of the Church was asked to serve as Moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches and was grateful to the Church during these two years for the generous interest it showed in the work to which he was called to devote something of his time and strength and for the liberty which was granted him to undertake this form of service.

The Church was active at the founding of the Federation of Churches in Hartford. Its representatives have always had place upon the Council of the Federation and some very considerable part in the activities that have marked the development of inter-church life. The same thing could be said with respect to the organization of the Connecticut Federation of Churches, and while the Church was not engaged in the person of any individual in the organization of the Federal Council of Churches, it was represented at those organization meetings by its Minister and early and eagerly contributed to the expenses of that work in token of its interest in the organized expression of unity of spirit among the free churches of our country. In all these tasks the Church has sought to be loyal to its name. It is not corporately a Congregational Church by name. It is as it was in the beginning, The First Church of Christ in Hartford. It has been glad to walk in



the Congregational way and has found that way a good way, leading through pleasant paths and into needy fields ready for the seed of the sower or for the hands of the reaper. But the Church is devoted above all things to Him whose name it bears and to the wider ranges of His Kingdom which shall be inclusive of all lesser loyalties. It is content to walk in the Congregational way with all loyalty to that way, but it believes in, prays for and confidently expects ever to express in word, in life and in service, its loyalty to the purposes of God, with full recognition that many communions worship Him in sincerity and truth and will share in the final consummation of His kingdom.

## CHAPTER XI

### *The Church and its Growing Faith*

It is doubtless hardly safe to undertake to appraise the faith of another generation in comparison with our own. It is so easy to impute to another generation ideas with which we find ourselves out of sympathy and then to dress those ideas in outlandish garments and hold them up for the scorn of our own time. This has been a favorite method of theological controversy and we are concerned here not with theological controversy but with some adequate conception of the changes that have taken place in the development of Christian thought throughout immediately preceding generations.

Now it is interesting to know that for nearly two hundred years of its history this Church lived without any definitely accepted or even recognized creed. Indeed Joel Hawes, when he came to the Church in 1818, deplored the fact that the Church not only had no creed, but that the covenant that it was using as a confession of faith for those entering into its fellowship seemed to him to be "Arminian" in its character. It contained the following statement, after asking for a belief in God as manifest in three persons and an acceptance of the scriptures as the word of God and the promise to make them the rule of life and conduct: "You

own yourself to be by nature a child of wrath and declare that your only hope of mercy is through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, whom you now publicly profess to take for your Lord and Savior, your prophet, priest, and king, and you now give up yourself to Him to be ruled, governed and eternally saved. You promise by divine grace regularly to attend all the ordinances of the gospel as God may give you light and opportunity and to submit to the rule and government of Christ in this Church." This covenant had at some time during nearly two hundred years presumably taken the place of the somewhat longer covenant which was probably the one framed by the founders of the Church, with the help of the first Minister and its first Teacher, and used, it is quite certain, during the first thirty years of the life of the Church in Hartford. We shall return to the consideration of this covenant later.

Dr. Hawes had come from Andover to Hartford and at this time the beginnings of the Unitarian division had made a deep mark upon the church life of eastern Massachusetts. He felt that the declaration quoted above was quite inadequate for the Church which he proposed to serve and for those he might hope to welcome into the fellowship. Dr. Hawes therefore persuaded the Church to adopt a series of articles of faith. These articles of faith declare a belief in the Trinity; they posit the scriptures as the infallible rule of doctrine and duty; they affirm the divine providence, original sin, the depravity of man; they declare the incarnation and atonement without specifying their method; they affirm the inability of man to accept salvation and the dependence of man upon the mercy of God for his salvation. An interesting article is the ninth because of its strong ethical note: "We believe that a conscientious discharge of the various duties



which we owe to God, to our fellowmen, and to ourselves, is not only constantly binding on every Christian, but affords to himself and to the world the only decisive evidence of his interest in the Redeemer." The articles further affirm the independent theory of church government and also include a conviction as to a future judgment with its issue in everlasting punishment or life eternal. Dr. Hawes required each member entering the Church on confession of faith to give assent to these doctrines. He expanded somewhat the covenant which he found, adding out of the instinct of a pastor, words of real tenderness and grace and including a statement of the Church with regard to its new members as follows: "We then as a Church . . . promise to treat you with Christian affection; to watch over you with tenderness; to offer our prayers to the great Head of the Church that you may be enabled to fulfill the solemn covenant which you have now made."

The preaching of Dr. Hawes as preserved for us in a few of his published sermons and as reflected in his addresses to young men, shows that deep in his heart were these convictions which he had written into the articles of faith. He believed in a high doctrine of the Trinity involving metaphysical distinctions within the Godhead. He believed in original sin, in the total depravity of man, in the necessity of enabling grace and it could fairly be said that he believed in divine grace as irresistible, though it is to be recognized that when he preached, he preached as though the will of man had significant power to act in the process of salvation. He certainly believed in judgment and everlasting punishment for those who should not accept the offers of salvation.

It is to be presumed that for the most part in these matters he reflected the judgment of his own time,

opinions that were held by most of the leaders among the churches of his period and that most of the thoughtful people of the Church and the community believed in doctrines of this sort following upon the preaching of Edwards and his successors in the Great Awakening. In the theology of Dr. Hawes there was an emphasis upon practical religion, an emphasis which has been characteristic of the Church from its beginning. Certainly this has been true of those ministers concerning whose preaching we know most, namely Hooker, Stone, Hawes, and Walker.

One cannot doubt that there was a sternness about the form in which the faith was proclaimed in the pulpit of this Church throughout that whole period. It was a robust faith. It could never be accused of spinelessness or weakness, but one wonders if it did not repel more than was necessary the instincts of the heart on the part of great numbers of those who must have listened to it with fear and trembling.

If we could enter into the perspective of history, we should see faith changing, if not from decade to decade, certainly from generation to generation, down through all these years. To us, lacking in perspective, it seems that the faith of the fathers remained about the same from the beginning until almost our own time, and that it was only then that changes were made in the characteristic way of setting forth the Christian truth.

Now it is certainly true that the expression of the faith has markedly changed. Not for forty years has anyone been asked to affirm his belief publicly as in the articles of Dr. Hawes of 1818. Dr. Walker in his ministry used to ask prospective candidates for church membership whether they believed in the articles of faith as they had been interpreted, referring thereby to his own interpretation of those



articles in his effective pulpit ministry. One man who was a member of the Church thirty years ago said that when he united with the Church he was asked whether he believed the articles of faith so far as he understood them, and said he was able to give an affirmative answer to this question because as a matter of fact he did not understand them at all!

In 1903 when the new rules of the Church were adopted no one asked that the articles of faith of 1818 be included in them. Indeed the order of service for the admission of members adopted by the Church in 1895 made no provision for these articles but did include the ancient and finely phrased covenant which had been preserved in the usage of the Second Church from 1670, and which was presumed by Dr. Walker to have been substantially the covenant used by the First Church at its original establishment.

In 1913 the National Council of the Congregational Churches at its meeting in Kansas City adopted as part of the preamble of a constitution for the Council a confession of Christian faith couched in relatively modern terms and given in the spirit of the historic ancient covenants of the Pilgrim and Puritan churches. This Church has had great satisfaction in the use of this confession which may well be noted here. It has a moral quality, a social outlook, a spirit of liberty in the interpretation of scripture and in the intellectual understanding of theological and religious ideas, which render it acceptable to the great body of modern Christians and the Church has been glad to use it as a symbol of its allegiance to the common Christian faith. The Church has also been accustomed to use the Apostles Creed occasionally. But in the rules of the Church it is provided that those who are received into its membership are to give assent to the covenant of the Church and to the common



Christian faith, specifically stating that it may be expressed in the Apostles Creed, in the confession of 1913, or in such other statement of this faith as the candidate may choose to offer and the Church be willing to receive.

Now all this is to say that this Church of Christ gives full liberty on all matters of theological opinion provided there be agreement of moral purpose on the part of its members and congregation. It is concerned not with the forms of theological belief but with moral assent to the ideal of life proclaimed in the Gospel of Jesus and with the willing devotion of the individual to that ideal. To be sure there is implied some common agreement upon Christian essentials, though it would be somewhat difficult even for the wisest among us to state precisely what are the essentials upon which agreement is implied or assumed. They have sometimes been stated as the moral leadership of Jesus, the fatherhood of God, the spiritual nature of God, the spirituality and the brotherhood of man to be developed and promoted by the fellowship of the church, the reality of sin and the power of love for its remedy, the coming of the reign of God and the gift of eternal life. The average member of this Church lives in the light of these major convictions, but the door of the Church is opened wide for all who will declare themselves Christian and who will make the simple statement, "I believe in the Gospel of Jesus and I am seeking to follow Him and His way."

For many years letters of dismission were granted only to those churches which could be designated as evangelical and were more or less rightly supposed to hold conceptions of Christian faith similar to those held in this Church and only from such churches were letters received. In more recent years letters have been granted to any Christian Church

for which they were desired by any member of this Church, and letters have been received from some fellowships of Christian people that formerly were not classed as evangelical. They now have abundant recognition among this people as churches worthy of confidence to which members may be dismissed and from which members may be received. In all this the Church believes it is loyal to the central spirit of the Gospel, "Whosoever will, let him come." Probably as many shades of theological opinion are included in the fellowship of this Church as would be likely to be found in any church of similar size and cordial welcome has been given to them all. This is a symbol of a like tolerance, we trust, in matters of opinion upon social, economic and political issues. Indeed it is here that the difficulty is more likely to develop in modern times. Theological heresies are not much hunted out now, among New England churches at least, but economic and political heresies have had a good deal of attention. One may be permitted to hope that the freedom of theological opinion which has been achieved in the First Church of Christ in Hartford may continue and that likewise a similar freedom of opinion upon social, economic and political matters may ever be given to its people. But through all changes may the central loyalty to the growing Gospel of the free spirit of Jesus the Teacher and Leader be ever manifest in this fellowship.



## CHAPTER XII

### *The Gospel — Then and Now*

THIS CHURCH is entering upon the three hundredth year of its history. The world in which its life must now be lived is far different from the world in which that life was begun. Through what tremendous changes has our world come during these three hundred years! The primitive period of the first settlement of our valley, the development of the hard-pressed life of the pioneer communities into the settled order of the early colony; the struggles for the beginnings of educational institutions and of cultural opportunities in a life hard beset by physical necessities, the periods of emotional stress and strain symbolized by the Great Awakening; the struggle for political independence and for the establishment of the new national life; the ebbtide of religious interest that followed upon the Revolution, the religious and moral enthusiasm of the early nineteenth century developing toward the assertion of conscience in denouncing the evil of slavery; the dark cloud of civil strife and its inevitable results in the spiritual attitudes of men, the intensification of human passions that followed upon those years of struggle; the development of industry, the conquest of the national domain, the growth of a nation-wide commerce, the rapid development of education and science; the high hopes with which the twentieth century was ushered in, the terrible disillusionment of the

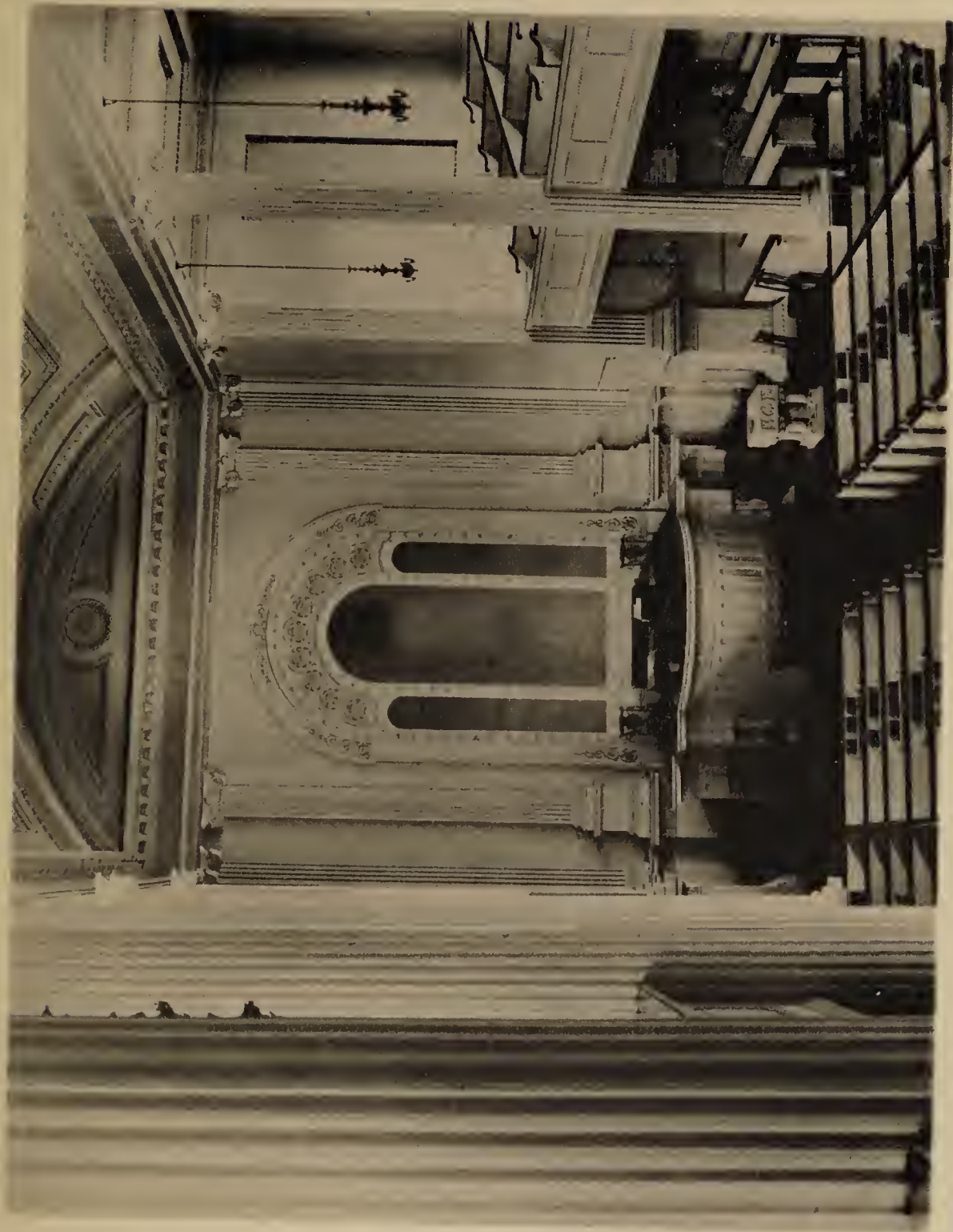


World War, the sudden and illusory rise of hope at its close, the present moment with its bitter realization of the losses inflicted upon humanity by the world crisis—mighty are the experiences of the three hundred years that are gone!

Now through all these stages of the life of the people this Church has borne its witness to the Gospel. Can it be true that the Gospel of Jesus has a meaning and a message that can persist in its worth and value through such periods of change? Can it be true that the interests we discern in that Gospel today are true to the heart of its message of three hundred years ago? Can it be true that the Christianity of today is the same as the Christianity of the beginnings of this Church?

It is true. God who hath shined in our hearts, giving us knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus, is the God who shone in the hearts of our fathers through those generations that are gone. He is the God who through two thousand years has shone in the hearts of all those who have sought Him by the way of Jesus and He is the same God who, before the coming of Jesus, shone in the hearts of those who did justly and wrought mercy and walked humbly before Him in whatever land or of whatever people they were.

Religion among us is concerned with the development of personality through character. We believe that man can come to his fullest and his highest only as his will is subdued to the disciplines of personal holiness and righteousness. We are sensitive to the losses suffered by our common life through those failures that are produced by the breaking down of moral stature, by the weakening of the fiber of character. Our fathers were interested in the process of conversion for retrieving these losses; we are interested in the processes of character education for preventing these losses and for building such character as can renew itself



*Interior of fourth Meeting House*





when it suffers loss, because it is related in a healthy and organic way to the sure purpose of God's good will working in the individual human life. We are learning anew what Jesus meant when He said, "Except ye repent and become as little children ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." The practical religion of our churches today is increasingly concerned with the development and guidance of child life and of youth. If the activities of a modern church would seem bewildering to the men and women of three generations ago—even one generation ago—if they would be confused and distracted by the number and variety of the things that are being done in the church of today, that is not because the central purpose of the Church has been changed. It is because the Church has learned that the business of conversion can be truly accomplished only when it becomes indeed the real building of character after the pattern that is seen in the life of Jesus. This can be done only by patient and varied and long-continued methods of instruction and guidance. The ideas and ideals of Jesus must be seen in widely varied conditions and developed patiently in practice through long periods of diligent discipline. Upon the minds and the hearts of boys and girls, of youths and maidens, through clubs and classes, in societies and conferences, the light that shines from the face of Jesus is shining and it is the same light that shone upon the lives of the fathers as they gathered for their simple worship in their plain Meeting House. The movement of youth as it expresses itself in the church life of today is a movement toward the realization of the highest Christian ideals in the development of personal character.

The life of the Church of today is increasingly concerned to understand the meaning of the Christian message as related to the main currents of the world's thought. The

whole body of Christian thinking is being subjected to a criticism as severe as any to which it has been subjected through its past history. In the face of this criticism earnest Christian thinkers in every land are dedicating themselves to a new appraisal of the Christian values. They are discerning the worth of the Christian ideals for our time and for the future. They are meeting the questing spirit of the times with volumes and articles which are designed to show the possibilities of real Christian faith in the midst of the currents of the world's thought and to preserve for the present and the future the lasting values of the Christian attitude toward life. We rejoice in this quest for truth. It will lead to the feet of Him who said, "I am the truth." It is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus. It is the same light that shone in the hearts of our fathers. Not exclusively from pulpits does the light shine, but from thousands of printed pages as well. It is the same light and it guides to the same goal.

The Christianity of our time is concerned increasingly with the relation of man to man. The earlier emphasis on the social gospel which characterized at least our American Christianity a generation ago, was premature and ineffective. That is not to say that it came too soon, but it is to say that the Church was not ready to receive it and did not know how adequately to use it. The national, racial and international problems, political, social and economic, which have been forced upon us as a result of the World War, teach us how desperately the application of the Gospel to society is needed and how vast are the issues that depend upon some adequate application of that Gospel to these great ranges of human life. When we try to discuss in the light of Christian principles, international relationships, national problems which have their inevitable political asso-



ciation, economic problems and the problems involved in the inter-relationships of nations and peoples, we seem sometimes to be getting far away from the simplicities of the Christian Gospel. But the light that seeks to lead the Church to face these momentous issues streams from the face of Him who went about doing good, and it is the light of the divine purpose of God who is seeking to realize Himself in all the relationships of human living. Undoubtedly many who are inadequately equipped for the task rush in with attempts to solve these problems. Undoubtedly also the solution of them can never be accomplished by the Church acting in her official capacity. But that the Church should see the problems is inevitable if she is to be true to the vision of her Lord; that she should feel the need of their solution is inevitable if she is to follow Him with compassion along the ways of human life. Let her recognize that the ideal of a world of peace and justice, of righteousness and of love, is an ideal which shines out of the words of Jesus, an ideal which comes from the heart of God. It is an ideal which has always hung over the hearts of those who are devoted to the will of God, however little they may have discerned what it means or what is the cost of the process by which it is to be attained. When the first members of this Church were gathered together in an allegiance to the will of God so far as it was known to them and in a pledge to follow that will in whatsoever way it might become known to them, they had little idea of the range of problems which the fulfillment of such a vow would bring before their children when ten generations had passed. But the light that is now falling upon those children challenging them to address themselves to these problems is the same light that fell upon the fathers as they dedicated themselves to that inclusive purpose.



The teaching and the preaching of this Church are and will be loyal to the central purposes of the Kingdom of our Lord. Ranging over the fields of the thought of our time, facing its baffling problems, seeking to understand the meaning of the old Gospel which is ever new for the new time, which after all has grown directly out of the old time, the Church will continue its ministry of patient teaching and gracious comfort, of prophetic truth and human service, being well assured that the purpose of the living God is being realized through its ministry, and that its people are having part in the hastening of that Kingdom which can be long delayed by the willfulness of men, but which cannot be overcome, and which will prevail in bringing the ministries of the abundant life to each man and to all men.

*Dr. Hawes' Prayer at the close of the second century  
in Hartford*

“And now may the same Almighty and Merciful Being, who for two centuries has guarded and blessed this vine of his own planting, continue to shed down upon it the refreshing dews of his grace, even unto the end of time. Here may the gospel ever be preached in purity and power; all its holiest influences be felt; its divinest fruits be exhibited, and its richest consolations enjoyed. May there be here a perpetuated succession of wise, devoted and successful pastors, who shall break the bread of life to a united, affectionate and Christian people. And when the voices of those who now worship here shall be silent in death, may their children and their children’s children, to the latest generation, enjoy the presence and behold the glory of God, and ascend, from this place, in growing multitudes, to join heart to heart with the ransomed of the Lord, in the purer and nobler worship of Heaven.”

## APPENDIX I

### *Chronology - 1879 - 1932*

#### *The Pastorate of George Leon Walker*

- 1879—(February 27) George Leon Walker installed as the fourteenth Minister of the Church.
- 1883—The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Church observed in October.
- 1883—The Leonard Church organ, the gift of Mrs. Lucy S. Church, dedicated at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary.
- 1883—Nathan H. Allen engaged as organist.
- 1883—"The Parsonage Circle" formed by the young ladies of the Church for the study of Home Missions.
- 1885—The hour of Sabbath School changed from three-fifteen in the afternoon to the close of the morning service.
- 1885—"The Boys Christian Association of the First Church" formed under the leadership of Solon P. Davis.
- 1886—The Ladies Sewing Society, organized in 1859, became the Ladies Home Missionary Society, auxiliary to the Home Missionary Union of Connecticut.
- 1887—Membership—572.
- 1887—The Central Sabbath School Society, the Sunday School of this Church, an independent organization since its founding in 1818, formally adopted by the Church.
- 1887—The tenth year of the Girls' Mission Circle, an organization which later became the "Boys and Girls Mission Circle", and was active until 1911, when its work was taken over by the Sunday School.
- 1887—Death of Mrs. Amelia *Whittlesey* Brown, for 45 years superintendent of the "infant department" of the Sunday School.



## *Chronology*

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- 1888—A Christian Endeavor Society organized.  
1888—Rev. James W. Bixler appointed assistant to the Minister.  
1888—The Parsonage removed from 58 Grove Street to 46 Prospect Street.  
1889—Rev. Frank R. Shipman succeeded Mr. Bixler as assistant to the Minister.  
1891—The Parsonage Circle became the Young Ladies Home Missionary Society, auxiliary to the Home Missionary Union of Connecticut, having been reorganized and enlarged.  
1891—An afternoon Vesper Service instituted as an experiment “to counteract the tendency to neglect church going”, a service which continued for thirty-seven years.  
1892—(July 1) Dr. George Leon Walker resigned and was made Pastor Emeritus, having served the Church thirteen years and four months.  
1892—Membership 602.  
1892—Rev. Frank R. Shipman resigned as assistant to the Minister.  
1892—Rev. Charles H. Williams appointed to take Mr. Shipman’s place, and to act as interim Pastor, in which office he served fourteen months.  
1893—John Palmer Gavit appointed superintendent of Warburton Chapel, succeeding Daniel R. Howe, for many years a volunteer worker.

### *The Pastorate of Charles Marion Lamson*

- 1894—(February 7) Charles Marion Lamson installed as fifteenth Minister of the Church.  
1894—90 Buckingham Street purchased as the Parsonage, Dr. Walker having bought the Prospect Street house.  
1894—Boys’ Christian Association disbanded, and the Girls’ Mission Circle reorganized as the “Boys’ and Girls’ Mission Circle”.  
1894—A Cradle Roll organized.  
1895—The original covenant of this Church, which had been used continuously by the Second Church since its separation in 1670, was again adopted, and the present form for the reception of members instituted.  
1895—The Church incorporated under the Laws of the State.  
1895—Oscar A. Phelps appointed Superintendent of Warburton Chapel, succeeding John Palmer Gavit.  
1896—Elliott F. Talmadge, appointed “Church Helper”.

## *Hartford's First Church*

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- 1896—The D. A. R. began agitation for the widening of Gold Street and the restoration of the Ancient Burying Ground, a project instigated by Dr. Walker.
- 1897—Christian Endeavor Society reorganized as the First Church Young People's Society, a society which has been reorganized and subdivided several times in the course of the years.
- 1897—Membership—643.
- 1898—Parsonage at 90 Buckingham Street sold, and 142 Washington Street bought.
- 1898—First Church Auxiliary to the Hartford Branch, Woman's Board of Missions, organized as the Women's Foreign Missionary Society.
- 1899—The work of widening Gold Street and restoring the Ancient Burying Ground completed.
- 1899—(August 8) Dr. Lamson died suddenly in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, having served the Church five years and six months.
- 1899—Professor Melancthon W. Jacobus served the Church in the interim between pastorates.
- 1899—The Foreign Missionary Club, a society of young women for the study of foreign missions, organized.
- 1900—(March 14) Dr. Walker, Pastor Emeritus, died.

### *The Pastorate of Rockwell Harmon Potter*

- 1900—(October 3) Rockwell Harmon Potter installed as sixteenth Minister of the Church.
- 1901—Commemorative Service and unveiling of the tablets in memory of George Leon Walker and Charles Marion Lamson.
- 1902—Membership—693.
- 1902—The Knights of King Arthur organized.
- 1903—The Ecclesiastical Society, the organization established to transact the business of the Church, voted to transfer all its property to the Church as a corporation.
- 1904—Eliott F. Talmadge resigned as assistant to the Minister.
- 1904—Oscar A. Phelps appointed "Lay Assistant to the Minister", and Superintendent of the Sunday School.
- 1905—Mrs. Francis Buell Cooley and her children offered one hundred thousand dollars to the Church for the purchase of a site and the erection of a Parish House, in memory of Francis Buell Cooley.



## *Chronology*

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- 1906—Resignation of Nathan H. Allen as organist and appointment of John Spencer Camp as his successor.
- 1906—Helen Everton Brown became secretary to the Minister.
- 1907—Membership—824.
- 1907—The Church participated in the Chapman Evangelistic Campaign.
- 1907—Celebration of the two hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Church and the one hundredth of the building of the Meeting House.
- 1907—The “Leonard Church” organ rebuilt and dedicated at the anniversary exercises.
- 1908—The cornerstone of the new Parish House laid.
- 1908—“Center Church Men” organized.
- 1909—“The Council of the Women” organized, consisting of the officers and delegates from the four missionary societies of the women of the Church.
- 1909—“The Missionary Council” organized, composed of the Committee on Benevolence, and delegates from the women’s societies, Center Church Men and the Sunday School.
- 1909—The pledge and envelope system of benevolences adopted.
- 1909—Center Church House, the new Parish House, dedicated and opened for use.
- 1910—A camp for boys inaugurated at Columbia Lake under the auspices of Center Church Men.
- 1911—The Church participated in the Men and Religion Forward Movement.
- 1912—Membership—964.
- 1912—A missionary exhibition and educational campaign conducted by Center Church Men.
- 1912—People’s Sunday Evening Services held in the Meeting House during Lent, under the auspices of Center Church Men, continuing annually for five years.
- 1913—For the first time in the history of the Church the membership reached one thousand.
- 1914—“Center Church Guild” organized for the business and professional women of the Church.
- 1914—Gifts made to Center Church Camp of land and a bungalow by William A. Sanborn and Frederic C. Atkins.
- 1914—Helen Everton Brown, secretary to the Minister, appointed to the staff of the Church as secretary to the Church and the Minister.



## *Hartford's First Church*

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- 1915—The Young Women's Foreign Missionary Club united with the Women's Foreign Missionary Society.
- 1915—The first Every Member Canvass for the Support and Benevolences of the Church was made.
- 1916—A Treasurer of Benevolence was appointed to relieve the Treasurer.
- 1916—The fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of Warburton Chapel and the sixty-sixth of its founding observed.
- 1917—Membership—1085.
- 1917—An extensive restoration of the Meeting House accomplished, including the removal of the paint from the exterior brick walls.
- 1917—The Minister resumed the use of the Geneva gown in the pulpit.
- 1918—Carl McKinley appointed organist following the resignation of John Spencer Camp.
- 1918—The Church Service Flag for the World War contained one hundred and twenty-eight stars.
- 1919—"Center Church Women" organized with Home, Foreign and Community Welfare Departments, and all separate missionary societies, including the Council of the Women, discontinued.
- 1919—A Lenten School of Missions inaugurated and continued annually.
- 1920—"The Council of the Church" organized, consisting of the officers of the Church and its organizations.
- 1921—Alice Lyon Hildebrand appointed financial secretary.
- 1922—A series of weekly Lenten and Advent devotions in the Meeting House instituted.
- 1922—Membership—1151.
- 1922—Stanley Scott appointed Superintendent of the Sunday School to succeed Oscar A. Phelps.
- 1922—War Memorial Tablet dedicated.
- 1922—The Parsonage on Washington Street sold and the proceeds invested in a "Parsonage Fund", the income to be paid to the Minister.
- 1923—Evan F. Kullgren appointed Superintendent of Warburton Chapel, succeeding Oscar A. Phelps.
- 1923—Elsie J. Dresser appointed organist, succeeding Carl McKinley.
- 1924—Fiftieth anniversary of the appointment of Charles T. Welles as librarian of the Teachers' Library.

## *Chronology*

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- 1924—Evan F. Kullgren appointed Director of Education.
- 1924—Hour of the Church School changed to precede rather than follow the morning service.
- 1925—Observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Potter's installation as Minister.
- 1925-1926—The Minister granted a seven months leave of absence to join the American Board deputation to India.
- 1926-1930—Delmer H. Battrick served as Assistant in the Department of Religious Education.
- 1927—Recognition of fifty years of service by William B. Edwards as Sexton.
- 1927—Membership—1165.
- 1928—System of pew rentals abolished and free pews instituted.
- 1928—(June 3) Dr. Potter resigned as Minister, to take effect September 30, having served the Church twenty-eight years, and having accepted a call to become Professor in Practical Theology and Dean of the Hartford Theological Seminary.
- 1928—Dr. Charles S. Mills came to the Church as Acting Pastor.
- 1929—Women included in the membership of the Prudential Committee for the first time in its history.
- 1929—Helen Everton Brown appointed Minister's Assistant.
- 1929—The Parsonage Fund liquidated and 200 North Beacon Street purchased as a Parsonage.
- 1929—The Rockwell Harmon Potter Fund established in honor of the sixteenth Minister, the income to be designated annually for Home or Foreign Missions or Church support.

### *The Pastorate of John Milton Phillips*

- 1930—(April 30) John Milton Phillips installed as seventeenth Minister of the Church.
- 1930—Miriam Guleserian, who had served as secretary to Dr. Mills, appointed office secretary.
- 1930—Marshall E. Seeley succeeded Elsie J. Dresser as organist.
- 1931—Dr. Potter given the title of Honorary Minister at a Service of Recognition in the Meeting House.
- 1931—Evan F. Kullgren transferred to full time at Warburton Chapel.
- 1931—Charlotte M. Burnham appointed Director of Education.
- 1931—Organization of "Center Church Men" Luncheon Club and Business Girls' Luncheon Club, with current events talks by the Minister.

## APPENDIX II

### *The Record of the Ministers*

#### *Thomas Hooker*

Born—Marfield, Leicester County, England, July 7, 1586.  
Son of Thomas and ..... Hooker.  
B.A. Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 1608; M.A. 1611.  
Married—Susanna .....  
Children—Johanna, Sarah, John, Samuel, Mary, Sarah.  
Fellow and Lecturer, Emmanuel College, 1611-1620  
Rector, Parish of Esher, Surrey, 1620-1626  
Lecturer, Church of St. Mary's, Chelmsford, 1626-1629  
Preacher, Amsterdam, Delft and Rotterdam, Holland, 1630-1633  
Minister, Church at Newtown, Mass., which became  
The First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1633-1647  
Died—Hartford, Conn., July 7, 1647.

#### *Samuel Stone*

Born—Hertford, Hertfordshire, England, July, 1602.  
Son of John and ..... Stone.  
B.A. Emmanuel College, Cambridge, 1624; M.A. 1627.  
Married—1st ..... in England; 2nd Mrs. Elizabeth  
Allen of Boston.  
Children—John, Rebecca, Mary, Sarah, Elizabeth, Samuel,  
Joseph, Lydia, Abigail.  
Lecturer, Towcester, Northamptonshire, England, 1630-1633  
Teacher, Church at Newtown, Mass., which became  
The First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1633-1663  
Died—Hartford, Conn., July 20, 1663.



## *The Record of the Ministers*

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### *John Whiting*

Born—England, 1635.

Son of William and ..... Whiting.

B.A. Harvard, 1653; M.A. 1655.

Married—1st Sybil, daughter of Edward Collins, 1654.

2nd Phoebe, daughter of Thomas Gregson, 1673.

Children—Sybil, John, William, Martha, Sarah, Abigail, Samuel,  
Thomas, Mary, Elizabeth, Joseph, Nathaniel,  
Thomas, John.

Assistant, Church in Salem, Mass., 1657-1659

Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1660-1670

Minister, Second Church of Christ in Hartford, 1670-1689

Died—Hartford, Conn., Sept. 8, 1689.

### *John Haynes*

Born—Hartford, Conn., 1641.

Son of John and Mabel *Harlackenden* Haynes.

B.A. Harvard, 1658.

Married—Sarah, daughter of Richard Lord, 1668.

Children—John, Mabel, Sarah, Mary.

Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1664-1679

Died—Hartford, Conn., May 24, 1679.

### *Isaac Foster*

Born—Charleston, Mass., 1652.

Son of William and Ann *Brackenbury* Foster.

B.A. Harvard, 1671.

Married—Mrs. Mabel *Wyllys* Russell, 1680.

Children—Ann.

Fellow at Harvard, 1678-1680

Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1680-1682

Died—Hartford, Conn., August 21, 1682.

### *Timothy Woodbridge*

Born—Barford St. Martin's, Wiltshire, England, 1653.

Son of John and Mercy *Dudley* Woodbridge.

B.A. Harvard, 1675.

Married—1st Mrs. Mabel *Wyllys Russell* Foster, 1684.

2nd .....

3rd Mrs. Abigail *Warren* Lord, 1716.

Children—Timothy, Mary, Ruth, John, Susanna, Ashbel,  
Theodore.

## *Hartford's First Church*

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Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford,	1685-1732
Founder and Trustee, Yale College,	1701-1732
Moderator, Hartford North Association,	1709-1732
Moderator, General Association of the Colony, 1712.	
Died—Hartford, Conn., April 30, 1732.	

### *Daniel Wadsworth*

Born—Farmington, Conn., November 14, 1704.  
Son of John and ..... Wadsworth.  
B.A. Yale, 1726.  
Married—Abigail, daughter of Gov. Joseph Talcott, 1734.  
Children—Abigail, Daniel, Eunice, Elizabeth, Ruth, Jeremiah.  
Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1732-1747  
Trustee, Yale College, 1743-1747  
Died—Hartford, Conn., Nov. 12, 1747.

### *Edward Dorr*

Born—Lyme, Conn., Nov. 2, 1722.  
Son of Edward and Mercy *Griswold* Dorr.  
B.A. Yale, 1742.  
Married—Helena, daughter of Gov. Joseph Talcott, 1747 or 1748.  
Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1748-1772  
Died—Hartford, Conn., Oct. 20, 1772.

### *Nathan Strong*

Born—Coventry, Conn., Oct. 16, 1748.  
Son of Nathan and Esther *Meacham* Strong.  
B.A. Yale, 1769; D.D. College of New Jersey, 1801.  
Married—1st Anne, daughter of Solomon Smith, Nov. 22, 1777.  
2nd Anne McCurdy, June 20, 1787.  
Children—Anne Smith, Nathan, John McCurdy.  
Tutor, Yale College, 1772-1774  
Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1774-1816  
Incorporator, Missionary Society of Connecticut, 1798.  
Editor, Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.  
Trustee, Hartford Grammar School.  
Trustee, Connecticut Academy Arts and Sciences.  
Died—Hartford, Conn., Dec. 25, 1816.

## *The Record of the Ministers*

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### *Joel Hawes*

Born—Medway, Mass., Dec. 22, 1789.

B.A. Brown, 1813; B.D. Andover Seminary, 1817; D.D. Brown, 1831.

Married—Louisa, daughter of William Fisher, June 17, 1818.

Children—Louisa, Mary, unnamed infant, Thomas Hooker, Thomas Hooker, Joel Erskine.

Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1818-1864

Pastor Emeritus, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1864-1867

Corporate Member, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1838-1867

Fellow, Corporation of Yale College, 1846-1867

President, Board of Trustees, Hartford Female Seminary.

Died—Gilead, Conn., June 5, 1867.

### *Phineas Wolcott Calkins*

Born—Painted Post, New York, June 10, 1831.

B.A. Yale, 1856; D.D. Hamilton, 1877.

Married—Charlotte Grosvenor Whiton.

Children—Maude, Mary Whiton, Leighton, Raymond, Grosvenor.

Teacher, New Haven and Worcester, 1856-1859

Student, Union Theological Seminary and University of Halle, 1859-1861

Associate Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1862-1864

Minister, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1864-1866

Minister, North Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, 1866-1880

Minister, Eliot Church, Newton, Mass., 1880-1895

Minister, Montvale, Mass., 1898-1924

Died—Newton, Mass., Dec. 31, 1924.

### *George H. Gould*

Born—Oakham, Mass., Feb. 20, 1827.

Son of Rufus and Mary *Henry* Gould.

B.A. Amherst, 1850; B.D. Union Theological Seminary, 1853; D.D. Amherst, 1870.

Married—Nellie M. Grant, October, 1862.

Acting Pastor, Olivet Church, Springfield, Mass., 1863-1864

Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1864-1870

Acting Pastor, Piedmont Church, Worcester, Mass., 1872-1876

Acting Pastor, Union Church, Worcester, 1878-1880

Died—May 8, 1899.



## *Hartford's First Church*

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### *Elias H. Richardson*

Born—Lebanon, New Hampshire, August 11, 1827.  
B.A. Dartmouth, 1850; B.D. Andover Seminary, 1853; D.D. Dartmouth, 1876.  
Married—Jane M. Stevens, May 15, 1854.  
Children—five sons.  
Minister, Congregational Church, Goffstown, N. H., 1854-1856  
Minister, First Congregational Church, Dover, N. H., 1856-1863  
Minister, Richmond Street Church, Providence, R. I., 1863-1867  
Minister, First Congregational Church, Westfield, Mass., 1867-1872  
Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1872-1877  
Minister, First Church of Christ, New Britain, 1878-1883  
Died—New Britain, Conn., June 27, 1883.

### *George Leon Walker*

Born—Rutland, Vermont, April 30, 1830.  
Son of Charles and Lucretia *Ambrose* Walker.  
D.D. Yale, 1870.  
Married—1st Maria Williston, Sept. 16, 1858.  
2nd Amelia Larned, Sept. 15, 1870.  
Children—Williston, Charles A.  
Minister, State Street Church, Portland, Maine, 1858-1867  
Minister, First Church of Christ, New Haven, Conn., 1868-1873  
Acting Pastor, Centre Church, Brattleboro, Vt., 1875-1878  
Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1879-1892  
Pastor Emeritus, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1892-1900  
Member, Corporation of Yale University, 1887-1899  
Member, Board of Visitors, Andover Seminary, 1888-1897  
Member, Commission for "Creed of 1883".  
Member, Commission of Nine, A.B.C.F.M. on Missionary Appointments.  
Carew Lecturer, Hartford Theological Seminary, 1896.  
Died—Hartford, Conn., March 14, 1900.

### *Charles Marion Lamson*

Born—North Hadley, Mass., May 16, 1843.  
Son of Charles Edwin and Elizabeth *Cook* Lamson.  
B.A. Amherst, 1864; D.D. Amherst, 1885.  
Married—Helena Bridgman, December, 1869.

## *The Record of the Ministers*

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Children—Marion, Theodore, Richard, Charles, Kenneth.  
 Teacher, Williston Academy, Easthampton, Mass., 1864-1865  
 Teacher, Amherst College, 1865-1867  
 Minister, Porter Congregational Church, Brockton, Mass., 1869-1871  
 Minister, Salem Street Church, Worcester, Mass., 1871-1885  
 Minister, North Congregational Church, St. Johnsbury, Vt., 1885-1893  
 Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1894-1899  
 Trustee, Amherst College, 1888-1899  
 Director, Congregational Home Missionary Society, 1897-1899  
 President, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1897-1899  
 Died—St. Johnsbury, Vt., August 8, 1899.

### *Rockwell Harmon Potter*

Born—Glenville, N. Y., October 1, 1874.  
 Son of Spencer and Catherine *Harmon* Potter.  
 B.A. Union College, 1895; B.D. Chicago Theological Seminary, 1898; D.D. Union College, 1907; Rutgers, 1915; Williams, 1927.  
 Married—Jean A. Gilchrist, May 12, 1898.  
 Children—Richard M. Gilchrist, Amelia Harmon, Jean Mairs, Harmona Romeyn, Rockwell Harmon, Jr.  
 Minister, Reformed Dutch Church, Flushing, N. Y., 1898-1900  
 Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1900-1928  
 Honorary Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford, 1931-  
 Member, Commission of Nineteen on Polity, National Council of Congregational Churches, 1910-1913  
 Chairman, Commission on Missions, National Council of Congregational Churches, 1921-1923  
 Lecturer, Practical Department, Hartford Theological Seminary, 1919-1928  
 President, Board of Trustees, Warburton Chapel, 1901-  
 President, Board of Trustees, Connecticut Institute for the Blind, 1907-  
 President, Consumers League of Connecticut, 1913-1930  
 President, Connecticut Bible Society, 1904-  
 President, Connecticut Federation of Churches, 1920-1923  
 President, Congregational Home Missionary Society, 1915-1917  
 President, Congregational Church Extension Boards, 1917-1921



## *Hartford's First Church*

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President, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,	1925-
Moderator, National Council of Congregational Churches,	1923-1925
Trustee, Hartford Theological Seminary,	1902-1928
Trustee, Union College,	1921-1931
Trustee, Mt. Holyoke College,	1912-
Dean and Professor of Practical Theology, Hartford Theological Seminary,	1928-

### *John Milton Phillips*

Born—Jacksonville, Illinois, December 27, 1889.	
Son of William Sandusky and Mary <i>Wood</i> Phillips.	
B.A. Illinois College, 1912; S.T.B. Boston University, 1915; D.D. Illinois, 1929; Northland, 1930.	
Married—Eleanor E. Sinclair, October 3, 1917.	
Children—Jean Wood, Charlotte Sinclair, John Milton, Jr.	
Minister, Lynnvile Circuit, Illinois,	1910-1912
Assistant Minister, Central Congregational Church, Jamaica Plain, Mass.,	1912-1914
Minister, Park Ave. Church, Arlington Heights, Mass.,	1915-1920
Teacher, Babson Institute,	1920-1921
Minister, Central Congregational Church, Lynn, Mass.,	1922-1923
Minister, Franklin Street Church, Manchester, N. H.,	1923-1927
Minister, First Congregational Church, Akron, Ohio,	1927-1930
Minister, First Church of Christ in Hartford,	1930-
Chairman, American Committee, Bantu Youth League,	1929-
Chairman, New England Regional Committee on Prisons,	1932-
Chairman, Council of Twelve, Organizations Supporting the Eighteenth Amendment,	1930-
Chairman, Committee for Revision of Constitution, General Conference of Connecticut,	1931-1932
Director, Boston Seaman's Friend Society,	1930-
Trustee, Atlanta Theological Seminary,	1929-



### APPENDIX III

## *Memorial Funds*

### *For the Current Work of the Church*

#### The Fund of 1802:

The original fund was subscribed in 1802 "for the support of the ministry in the Society." In 1831 it was invested, together with the proceeds of the sale of the Old Conference Room on Temple Street, in the purchase of the building and land next north of the Meeting House.

The Francis B. Cooley Memorial Gift (1907): In 24 Lewis Street.

The Mary C. Bemis Fund (By gift prior to 1902).

The Charles T. Wells Fund (1910).

The Elvira Evans Roberts Fund (1911).

The Lewis E. Stanton Fund (1916).

The Mary Roberts Perkins Fund (1922).

The Marcia S. Sherman Fund (1922).

The Emily S. G. Holcombe Fund (1923).

The Charlotte J. Hillyer Fund (1925).

The Julia Pierson McConville Fund (1926).

The John H. Holcombe Fund (1927).

The Paulina S. Barker Fund (1927).

The Newman Hungerford Funds (1927).

The Edward H. Case Fund (Trust Fund 1928).

The Albert B. Gillett Fund (Trust Fund 1928).

The John B. Russell Fund (1928).

The James Moseley Foster Fund, (1932).

### *For the Care of the Meeting House*

The Emma C. Goodrich Fund (1918).

The Nellie A. and William A. Sanborn Flower Fund (1931).

The Clarence Catlin Hungerford Fund (1917).

## *Hartford's First Church*

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### *For Center Church House*

The Edward F. Harrison Fund (1925).  
The Nellie A. Sanborn Fund (1930).

### *For the Sunday School*

The Lavinia Morgan Fund (1905).  
The Caroline Catlin Hungerford Fund (1914).

### *For Center Church Women*

The Julia P. McConville Fund (1926).  
The Paulina S. Barker Fund (1927).  
The Helen D. Wilson Hungerford Fund (1927).  
The Maria D. Thompson Fund (1928).

### *For the Teacher's Library*

The Mary A. Warburton Fund (1867).

### *For Music*

The Rowland Swift Fund (1910).  
The Harriet E. Corning Fund (1910).  
The Frank T. Albro Fund (1927).

### *For the Poor of the Church*

The Mather Fund (prior to 1880).  
The Thomas Hender Fund (prior to 1880).  
The B. W. Greene Fund (prior to 1880).  
The Julia M. Ward Fund (1895).  
The George Leon Walker Fund (1901).  
The John S. Welles Fund (1903).  
The John Warburton Cooke Fund (1916).  
The Mary B. Brainard Fund (1921).  
The Frederic and Mary Eunice Burritt Knapp Fund (1922).

### *Funds for Young People and Summer Camp*

The Clarence Catlin Hungerford Funds (1927).

### *For the Educational and Hospital Work of the Church*

The Charles P. Croft Fund (1922).  
The Katharine S. Day Fund (1925). (Thomas Hooker Scholarship)

## *Memorial Funds*

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The Charles A. Jewell Free Bed Fund\*

The Augusta M. Manning Free Bed Fund\*

The Newman Hungerford Free Bed Funds\*

\* In possession of Hartford Hospital, the beneficiaries to be designated by the Church.

### *For Home and Foreign Missions*

The Joel Hawes Fund (1867).

The Edward F. Harrison Fund (1925).

The Rockwell Harmon Potter Fund (1929).

The Bertha L. Graves Fund (1929).



# *The Memorial Gifts*

## *The Windows*

The Pastors Window, at the west end of the Meeting House, in memory of the Pastors of the Church during the first two hundred and fifty years of its history, 1881.

### *On the north side of the Meeting House*

The Caldwell Window, in memory of John Caldwell, 1894.

The Seymour Window, in memory of Harvey Seymour, 1914.

The Day Window, in memory of Calvin and Catherine *Seymour* Day, 1894.

The Gallaudet Window, in memory of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, the founder of deaf-mute instruction in America and the first preacher to the insane, 1887.

The Wells Window, in memory of Horace Wells, the discoverer of anaesthesia, and Elizabeth *Wales* Wells, 1903.

The Hooker Window, in memory of "Thomas Hooker, Pastor of this Church 1633-1647; transplanted it to Hartford 1636; leader among the founders of this city and commonwealth."

### *In the north Vestibule*

The Catlin Window, in memory of the Catlin family, 1883.

### *On the south side of the Meeting House*

The Perkins Window, in memory of Ellen, George C. and Edward H. Perkins, 1886.

The Henry A. Perkins Window, in memory of Henry A. Perkins, 1886.

The Bissell Window, in memory of Henrietta *Perkins* Bissell (Mrs. Josiah), and Henrietta Perkins Bissell, 1884.

## *The Memorial Gifts*

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The Corning Window, in memory of Ezra Corning, George Corning and George W. Corning, 1887.

The Smith Window, in memory of Wilder Smith, 1894.

The Bryan Hooker Window, in memory of Bryan Edward Hooker, 1899.

## *The Tablets*

### *On the West Wall, North of the Pulpit*

The Hawes Tablet, in memory of Joel Hawes, Pastor of this Church, 1896.

### *On the West Wall, South of the Pulpit*

The Lamson Tablet, in memory of Charles Marion Lamson, Pastor of this Church, 1901.

The Walker Tablet, in memory of George Leon Walker, Pastor of this Church, 1901.

### *On the North Wall of the Meeting House*

The Parsons Tablet, in memory of John Caldwell Parsons, 1900.

The Williams Tablet, in memory of Thomas Scott Williams, 1896.

The Kendall Tablet, in memory of Stephen Preston Kendall, Lucretia Post Kendall, and Jennett P. Kendall Mayo (Mrs. William K.), 1888.

### *On the East Wall of the Meeting House*

The World War Memorial Tablet, "In honor of all members of this Church and congregation who served in the World War, and in grateful memory of those who died.

Franklin Allen, Frank Philip Bardons, William Cheney Brown, Jr., Robert Swift Gillett, Henry Jacob Meisterling, Edgar Oakley Shirley, Charles McLean Smith." 1922.

The Cooke Tablet, in memory of John Warburton Cooke, 1899.

The Hills Tablet, in memory of J. Coolidge Hills, 1915.

### *On the South Wall of the Meeting House*

The Parker Tablet, in memory of John Dwight Parker, 1920.

The Dennis Tablet, in memory of Rodney Dennis, 1900.

*The Other Memorials*

- The Pulpit Bible in the Version of 1611, in memory of Solomon Smith, 1814.
- The Pulpit Bible, in the American Version of 1901, in memory of Charlotte A. Jewell, 1905.
- The Pulpit Table, in memory of Antoinette R. Phelps Pierson, 1903.
- The Baptismal Font, in memory of Clarissa May *Davis* Ely (Mrs. William), 1892.
- The Baptismal Bowl, in memory of George Leon Walker, Pastor of this Church, 1903.
- The Communion Table, in memory of Sarah *Emmons* Perkins (Mrs. Henry A.), 1901.
- The Communion Plates for use in the galleries, in memory of Caroline Catlin Hungerford (Mrs. Anson), 1904.
- The Memorial Chairs, in memory of ten founders of the Church, 1907.
- The Silver Offering Plates, in memory of eight founders of the Church, 1908.
- The Memorial Organ, in memory of Leonard D. Church, 1883.  
It was placed within the case of the organ built in 1835. In 1907 the organ was rebuilt as an anniversary gift of the Congregation in gratitude for the preservation of the Meeting House through one hundred years.
- The Safes for the keeping of the records of the Church and of the Communion Service, in memory of Anson Hungerford and Clarence Catlin Hungerford, 1904.
- The Day Gateway, at the north side of the Meeting House, serving as an entrance to the Ancient Burying Ground, was given in memory of John Calvin Day, 1903.
- The Center Church House, the Parish House of this Church, with the site on which it is built was given in memory of Francis B. Cooley, 1909.
- The Camp Site at Columbia Lake, in memory of Daniel R. and Annie R. Sanborn, 1914.



*The use of illustrations in this volume is made possible through the gift of Mrs. Rockwell Harmon Potter.*

*Many of the photographs are the work of John Haley, who also prepared all the illustrations for the press with the exception of that of Dr. Phillips, for which acknowledgment is made to Bachrach.*

*The picture opposite page twelve of the First Meeting House and Thomas Hooker's House are from a facsimile of the frontispiece in the first American edition of Hooker's "The Poor Doubting Christian."*











